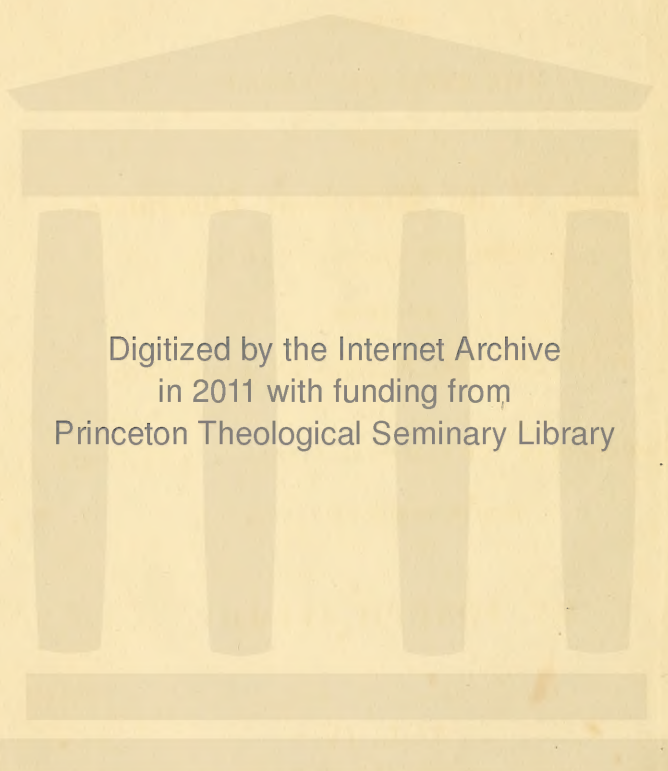


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A
HISTORY
OF THE
ENGLISH BAPTISTS:

COMPRISING

THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS

OF THE

History of the Protestant Dissenters,

DURING THE REIGN OF GEO. III.

AND OF THE

BAPTIST CHURCHES IN LONDON,

WITH

NOTICES OF MANY OF THE PRINCIPAL CHURCHES IN THE COUNTRY

DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

BY JOSEPH IVIMEY.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
ISAAC TAYLOR HINTON, WARWICK SQUARE;
AND
HOLDSWORTH & BALL, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1830.

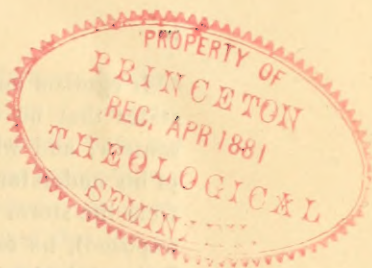
ENGLISH-BAPTISTS HISTORY

History of the Protestant Dissenters

LONDON :

PRINTED BY R CLAY, BREAD-STREET-HILL.

PREFACE.



IT is now upwards of twenty years since the Author commenced the compilation of this Work. The materials have been collected from a variety of sources, and nothing has been withheld which he considered important to give a correct and full History of the English Baptists. He has neither disguised nor exaggerated, but has related facts as he found them.

The testimonies of approbation of the work received by him from those late excellent ministers, Messrs. Sutcliff, Fuller, and Dr. Ryland, so far as the publication had been carried at the respective periods of their deaths, weighed more with him than the recorded sentiments of *reviewers*, however flattering, would have done.

He could mention names of persons living who also have expressed their satisfaction; but he will not run the risk of being charged with, or suspected of, flattery. He will, however, make an extract from a letter of his esteemed correspondent, the late Rev. Dr. Baldwin, of America, dated "Boston, June 6, 1814:—I am much pleased with your History of the Baptists; we look back to them with veneration as to the *stock* from which the American Baptists originated. I am confident that in proportion as our history is understood, our characters will rise in public estimation. I was brought up with strong prejudices against the denomination; but when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, I was led to examine the subject with very different feelings. The consequence was, I became a thorough Baptist; my Bible and my conscience alone compelled me to relinquish *the traditions of my fathers.*"

If egotism may be allowed on such a subject, the writer states that he was brought up among the Socinian dissenters; and when he left them (the time when the eyes of his understanding were opened to look out for a covert from the storm of divine wrath, to which he saw himself exposed), he for some time attended the ministry of an Independent preacher. He united himself with the Baptists from a full persuasion that their distinguishing sentiments were in strict accordance with the New Testament. It is now upwards of *thirty-eight years* since he was baptized on a profession of his faith, and he feels at this moment the fullest conviction that as to the revealed will of Christ, and the practice of inspired men in regard to baptism, all descriptions of Christians have gone out of the way of truth and primitive simplicity, except the Baptists: to them and to them alone he considers the praise to belong of having kept the ordinances as they were at first delivered to the churches. The writer feels, too, a pleasing degree of satisfaction that he has been, as Dr. Baldwin expressed himself, "a thorough Baptist." He has thought it right to observe the boundary line which divides the Baptist from the Pædobaptist denominations. In his mind nothing would have justified his conduct in becoming a Baptist, but his conviction that a regard to the authority of Christ demanded his separating himself from those sects, who had either changed the ordinance, as the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents, by the practice of infant sprinkling, or, as the Quakers, had totally neglected it. But the reasons which led him to object to unite himself with either of the Pædobaptist sects have operated to prevent him from giving his *sanction* in any way to what he considers the corruption of Christian Baptism: and this has led him to conclude that none but those whom he considers to be baptized persons, should be admitted into the communion of the Baptist churches. The principles which produced the Baptist denomination, will, if consistently observed, preserve it distinct from the

other denominations of Christians. He does not hesitate in giving it as his opinion, that the violation of this principle has been the chief cause that the Baptists have not been a more numerous, and, in the popular estimation, a more honourable body of Protestant dissenters. At every period of their history many of the principal families for wealth and respectability among them have manifested tergiversation, by occasionally uniting at the Lord's table with Pædobaptists, or have altogether left the denomination by uniting in fellowship with the Independent churches. In the opinion of the writer, nothing could have justified such conduct but the want of evangelical truth, and the impossibility of obtaining it in their own denomination. It is deeply affecting to think of the great number of baptized believers who are at this time members both in the London and country Independent churches. He respects them as Christians and as Dissenters, but he cannot as Baptists. He submits to their serious consideration, how much more useful and respected they would have been, could they have said, "I dwell among my own people."

The writer takes this opportunity of recording his sentiments also in regard to the denomination to which he is cordially attached, both by principle and affection. Considering the unpopularity of their distinguishing sentiment, he does not wonder they have always been the least of all the tribes of Israel; the smallest denomination among the Protestant dissenters.* The Baptists have had to swim against the tide: wealth, popularity, and applause, have been on the side of those who have practised infant baptism.

The author is fully aware, also, of many things among the Baptists, by which they have themselves contributed to keep the churches small, and the denomination in low

* This is not now the case, because the Presbyterians have been so greatly reduced by Socinianism and other causes.

estimation with the public. They have been much too indifferent in regard to the influential qualities of those whom they have called to the pastoral office in their churches. Their zealous attachment to the doctrines of evangelical truth have, in very many instances, led them to overlook the almost total want of the gifts for edification,—native eloquence, a love for reading, a well-informed mind, and a knowledge of the world, which are requisite to attract in the pulpit, or to preside in the church meetings.

Another defect has been, a disregard to the scriptural qualifications in the choice of deacons. The constitution of our churches requiring that every thing, in respect to the admission or dismissal of members, should be done by an appeal to the suffrages of all the members, and that all necessary pecuniary supplies should be obtained from the voluntary contributions of the people, the deacons are necessarily called to sustain a very important station; and should they be, more or less, destitute of liberality and zeal, or be heady and high-minded, obstinate and self-willed—should they, instead of cooperating with the pastor as brethren, endeavour to rule over him as lords, or to counteract his measures as opponents (and such things have been), the church with which they are connected cannot prosper. The churches cannot rationally expect enlargement, nor the denomination increasing respectability, unless a more scrupulous regard be paid to the choice of persons scripturally qualified, and suitably endowed with gifts and dispositions to sustain the pastor's and deacon's offices.

The writer, too, while he expresses his opinion, that the Baptist Churches are constituted upon the apostolic pattern, regrets sincerely that, in so many instances, the revealed authority of the Lord Jesus Christ has been disregarded. He has no doubt if the declining state of some churches, and the extinction of others, once large and flourishing, could be traced to their source, it would be

found that *expediency* had superseded *law*, and that *prudence* had taken the chair instead of *obedience*. There are none who understand the principle better, theoretically, "One is your Master, even Christ:" but they have, in various instances, in regard to discipline, omitted to regard it practically. They have not always promptly observed the direction, "Therefore put away from among you the wicked person," nor checked the ebullitions of strife and debate, nor "marked those who have caused strifes and divisions; and who, by soft words, and fair speeches, have deceived the hearts of the simple." These are the things which have tended, in some instances, to neutralize the pastor, so that he has become the servant of men instead of the servant of Christ; and, in others, have led to his removing from a station, where his conscience could not be left at freedom; and these circumstances, too, have often produced those needless and angry divisions and separations which have exposed the dissenting interest to reproach from members of the Established Church. The charge, that Congregational Churches are without rule and without government, has been borne out by very many disgraceful instances. Let it, however, be remembered, that these are the abuses of our system; we contend that the churches of Christ should be like independent republic states, governed, however, by a president and council, selected by and subject to the control of the people they serve.

It has afforded the writer great pleasure, in compiling the present volume, to record so many facts, proving that some of the most excellent religious societies of the benevolent age in which we live, have originated with persons of the Baptist denomination: of those distinguished individuals, it is sufficient to say, "their works praise them in the gates."

In completing these labours, the Writer dedicates the work to the Denomination whose history it professes to record. He does not expect, until at least the professions

of liberality are genuine, which, in many cases, he suspects they are not, that it will be read by persons who belong to other denominations of Christians. He looks back, without regret, on the labours and expense which its compilation has cost him, as a small tribute of respect which he owes to a body of Christians, from whom he has received a degree of respect beyond his expectations, and support equal to his necessities and wishes.

And now, in prospect of the final account which he must soon render, while he is conscious of many imperfections in these Four Volumes of Baptist History,* he declares, with great sincerity, "he has not written a line which he wishes to blot;" and therefore, hoping it may, probably, after he has been called to his rest, serve the cause of God and truth in this and in future generations, he consecrates it solemnly and devoutly to the blessing of his God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, adopting, he humbly trusts, without mistake or vanity, the language of Paul, "*whose I am, and whom I serve.*"

JOSEPH IVIMEY.

51, Devonshire Street, Queen Square.

April 30, 1830.

* * * The Volume having been nearly three years in course of printing, several parts of it, from particular political events, which have, since its commencement, very unexpectedly taken place, as the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, must be considered as expressing the Writer's sentiments at that period. The Reader is apprised that the Work is a *general* History of the denomination till the year 1820, and therefore he must not expect to find an account of every church belonging to it. Had the writer possessed the means for doing this, the limits of his work would have prevented him. A list of the churches was given in the Baptist Magazine for 1827.

* It was intimated in the Preface to the last volume, that the Work would be extended to *Five Volumes*; but, on consideration, the writer has completed it in *Four*.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

1760—1820.

THE third Monarch of the Royal House of Brunswick, George III., the grandson of the late king, ascended the British throne at the age of twenty-two years, on the 25th of October, 1760. The former two monarchs were Germans; but George III. was a "Briton born" and gloried in that privileged distinction.

The protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations "in and about the cities of London and Westminster," were among the first of the public bodies who hailed his Majesty's accession to the throne. On November 21, 1760, they presented an address at St. James's Palace. They were introduced by his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, and the address was read by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Chandler. The following is a copy extracted from the London Gazette :—

" TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

" The humble Address of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster.

" Most gracious Sovereign,

" We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster, most humbly beg leave to approach

Address to the King on his Accession.

[1760.]

your Majesty's throne, to express our deep sense of the great loss your Majesty, your kingdom, and Europe in general, have sustained by the death of his late Majesty, your royal grandfather; and with hearts full of affection and joy, to congratulate your Majesty's happy and peaceable accession to the crown of these realms.

"The numerous blessings these nations enjoyed, for a long series of years, under his late Majesty's auspicious government, and the great events that were dependant in Europe, made the preservation of your royal grandfather's important life the common desire, and earnest prayer of all good men in these nations; and their concern for his sudden removal would have been much more painful and durable, had not the knowledge of your Majesty's virtues and great abilities for government alleviated our anxieties, dissipated our fears, and filled us with the most pleasing prospects of the same continuance of our prosperity.

"Illustrious and ancient descent, princely education, prime of life, dignity of person, early piety and virtue, love of probity and truth, regard to liberty and rights of conscience, and your known affection to this your native country, peculiarly endear your Majesty to all your subjects, and promise them every thing they can want from the best of kings.

"Your Majesty ascends the throne in a time of difficulty, and amidst all the great expences and uncertainties of war, we adore the good Providence of God for the distinguishing successes that have attended it; and we trust, that, by his constant blessing on your Majesty's counsels and arms, your Majesty will soon become the glorious and happy instrument of establishing such a peace in Europe as shall effectively support the protestant religion and liberties, and secure the prosperity of these kingdoms upon solid and immoveable foundations.

"We recollect with joy and unfeigned gratitude that glorious era, which settled the succession to the throne of Great Britain in your Majesty's royal house; and perpetuated to these nations, under God, the free and undisturbed enjoyment of all their civil and religious liberties. And we humbly beg leave to assure you, most gracious Sovereign, that, entirely relying on

1760.]

His Majesty's Answer.

your Majesty's great goodness and justice for our share in the protection and blessings of your Majesty's government, we shall not fail, from dictates of conscience and gratitude, to be examples ourselves of loyalty and duty, and to inculcate on all who attend our ministry, that submission and obedience which they owe to your Majesty's authority and government.

"Nor shall we cease to offer up our most ardent supplications to Almighty God, that he would render your Majesty's prosperity so distinguished, as that, when Great Britain in future ages wishes well to any of her best beloved kings, the descendants of your royal house and family, your felicity, most illustrious Prince, may bound all her desires, and she may with joy and triumph say, 'May their reigns be as long, as glorious, and happy as your Majesty's.'

"To this address his Majesty was pleased to give the following gracious answer:—

"I thank you for this loyal and affectionate address, you may be assured of my protection, and of my care and attention to support the Protestant interest, and to maintain the toleration inviolable.

"They were very graciously received, and had all the honour of kissing his Majesty's hand."

The same day they waited upon her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales, his Majesty's royal mother, who was a great favourite of the Protestant Dissenters. Their sentiments in regard to the manner in which she had trained up her royal son, will be seen in the following speech of condolence and congratulation pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Chandler. They were introduced by Sir William Irby, Bart. This speech was published in the same Gazette with the address to his Majesty.

"TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS DOWAGER OF WALES.

"May it please your Royal Highness, "

"We his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the pro-

Address to the King's Mother.

[1760.]

testant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to approach your Royal Highness to express our just and great concern for the loss your Royal Highness and these nations have sustained, by the death of his late Majesty of glorious and blessed memory, and to congratulate your Royal Highness on the happy accession of his Majesty to the throne and government of these kingdoms.

“ Your Royal Highness well knew the importance of religious principles and good morals to secure a Prince's happiness and the welfare of his people ; and how much are these kingdoms indebted to your Royal Highness for forming the mind of his present Majesty to the most generous sentiments and disposition, preparing him, under the blessing of the Almighty, to govern with wisdom, integrity and righteousness, this great people ; and to be a pattern of every thing excellent and good, to all ranks and degrees of men ! And when your Royal Highness shall see religion and virtue, arts and sciences, trade and commerce, flourish under his Majesty's protection ; and your royal son shall be spoken of by all as the patron of learning, the friend of liberty, the favourite of Providence, and the delight of the best and worthiest of men, how will your Royal Highness's heart exult with pleasure, in reaping those liberal fruits of your maternal piety and goodness, and finding yourself esteemed, beloved, and honoured by a grateful and happy people !

“ Your Royal Highness will allow us to offer up our most ardent supplications to Almighty God, for the long life, and increasing honour and prosperity of his Majesty ; that your Royal Highness may be many years preserved to rejoice and share in the blessings of his reign ; that all the branches of your Royal Highness's family may be distinguished by the favour of Providence ; and that there never may be wanting one of your royal descendants to fill and adorn the British throne for evermore.”

To which her Royal Highness was pleased to return the following answer :—

“ I return you my thanks for your attention shewn to me, and for the duty you express for the King my son.”

1761.]

Address to the King on his Marriage.

Her Royal Highness received them very graciously, and they had all the honour to kiss her Royal Highness's hand.

One hundred and forty ministers were present on this occasion. Of the Baptists, Messrs. Anderson, Brine, Bulkley, Burford, Dew, Gill, Harrison, Stennett, Wallin, and others.

The feelings of the Baptists on this auspicious occasion may be judged of by the following quotation from a sermon preached by the Rev. D. Noble, Nov. 8, 1760 :—" We ought to recollect the obligations we are under to Providence for giving us such a prince as has now ascended the throne. Public fame speaks highly of his accomplishments and virtues. And the declarations he has already made may satisfy us that he will not deviate from the example of his glorious ancestors. Let us therefore cultivate every sentiment of loyalty and affection unto our gracious and only rightful sovereign, GEORGE the THIRD."

The circumstance of the King's marriage, Sept. 8, 1761, with the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh Strelitz, furnished another occasion for the expression of the affectionate and loyal congratulations of the General Body of Dissenting Ministers. The addresses were presented by a Baptist Minister. These, with the gracious replies, are now first published from the London Gazette :—

" *St. James's, November 20, 1761.*—This day the following Address was read and presented to his Majesty by the Rev. Mr. Thompson, Jun. accompanied by a Deputation from the Body of Dissenting Ministers in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, introduced by the Lord of the Bed-chamber in waiting, accompanied by his Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

" TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

" Most gracious Sovereign,

" We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, approach your royal presence with the sincerest congratulations, on account of your auspicious nuptials with a Princess distinguished for her amiable endowments and eminent virtues, as well as for her descent from an

ancient and illustrious family, firmly attached to the Protestant Religion, and to your Majesty's Royal House.

" If it be a Prince's glory to reign in the hearts of his subjects, your Majesty stands distinguished among the best and most justly beloved of your Royal predecessors. With the most fervent adoration of the Divine Providence, we observe that your Majesty's arms are crowned with victory in all parts of the globe; that the example of your piety and personal virtues command profound reverence at home, and will we trust by degrees promote a general reformation; and that government is administered with so wise and impartial a hand, that even a free people entertain no jealousy of that power which they see so faithfully exerted for the universal good.

" Amidst such various sources of joy, what wish could your affectionate subjects have formed more interesting to your Majesty or to themselves, who experience their Sovereign's happiness to be their own, than the alliance you have contracted with an illustrious Princess, deservedly the delight of your royal heart, as well as partner of your throne; whose amiable and gentle virtues will alleviate the cares of a crown, and yield satisfactions from this sacred bond of virtuous friendship, which Royalty itself cannot bestow. And it is a just foundation for our most grateful praise to the Almighty, that by this auspicious union, a prospect is opened of perpetuating to posterity the invaluable blessings we enjoy.

" At the throne of Grace we ardently implore the Divine Benediction on your Royal Person and Consort: may your conjugal and domestic felicity be uninterrupted and increasing; and may a race of Princes descend from your Majesties who shall inherit your virtues, be the guardians of our Civil and Sacred Liberties, Patrons of religion and ornaments to human nature. And when your Majesty, after having long reigned with unexampled glory to yourself and your kingdoms, shall through the divine goodness receive an immortal crown, may the imperial diadem, which hath been lately placed upon your royal head, amidst the repeated acclamations of a loyal and happy people, be transmitted to your descendants, and worn with equal dignity and splendour to the latest generations.

1761.]

Address to the Queen.

“ To which his Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer :—

“ I thank you for this loyal and affectionate address ; your congratulations on my marriage are extremely agreeable to me. You may be assured of my protection, and of my care and attention to support the Protestant interest, and to maintain the toleration inviolable.

“ Immediately after they were introduced to her Majesty by his Grace the Duke of Manchester, with the following address, which was read and presented by the Rev. Mr. Thompson, Jun. :—

“ TO THE QUEEN.

“ Most gracious Queen,

“ We, his Majesty’s most faithful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to approach your royal person with the most unfeigned expressions of joy and of gratitude to the great Governor of the World, on account of your safe arrival in these kingdoms, and your auspicious nuptials with our august Sovereign, whose personal virtues and princely endowments must endear him to your Majesty more than the crown he wears. We congratulate your Majesty not so much on the grandeur of the throne you are called to share, a throne which Divine Providence hath exalted to such distinguished eminence in the eyes of all Europe, as on those amiable qualities and signal virtues, for which you have been selected to render our Sovereign, and in him the nation, happy.

“ Our prayers shall continually ascend to the Almighty for the mutual felicity of the King and of your Majesty : may you reap the blessed fruits of your union to the joy of the present age, and the happiness of posterity. And in some distant, very distant period, complete in virtue, full of glory, and leaving monuments of your union to future generations, who shall rise up and call you blessed, may your Majesties exchange your earthly crowns for celestial diadems that shall never fade away.

Address to the King's Mother.

[1761.]

"To which her Majesty was pleased to give this very gracious answer :—

"I thank you for this mark of your duty to the King, and your affection to me. You may depend on my good wishes."

"*Leicester House, Nov. 20.*—This day a deputation of Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, being introduced to her Royal Highness, the Princess Dowager of Wales, by the Right Honourable Lord Boston, the following Address was read, and presented by the Rev. Mr. Thompson, Jun.

"TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS DOWAGER OF WALES.

"May it please your Royal Highness

"To permit the Protestant Dissenters, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, to congratulate your Royal Highness on the happy celebration of his Majesty's nuptials with an amiable and illustrious Princess.

"When your Royal Highness, during your tender care of his Majesty's earlier years, discerned those excellent qualities and princely virtues which then disclosed themselves, the contemplation of their advancing maturity must have created a pleasure, only to be conceived by your maternal heart, and only to be surpassed by the joy you have since felt in seeing the King your son, the delight as well as father of his people, completing an alliance which affords the prospect of happiness to the present and future ages.

"God grant your Royal Highness may live to see a race of Princes descended from their Majesties, and formed after their great examples, who shall reward their pious care in their education with the same ground of parental exultation and joy which the King has afforded your Royal Highness.

"To which her Royal Highness was pleased to give the following answer :—

"I return you my thanks for your kind congratulations, you may always depend on my best wishes."

1762.]

Address on the Birth of the Prince of Wales.

The birth of the Prince of Wales, Aug. 1, 1762,* his present Majesty, again drew forth the congratulations of this body. It will be seen too in what pointed language they refer to an event, which, while it deeply affected the Dissenting interest, had led to the establishment of the House of Hanover on the throne of England. That these reminiscences were grateful to the King, may be gathered from the circumstance of the ministers having been introduced to the *Nursery to see the Royal Infant*: an indulgence, so far as appears from the Gazette, which was not granted to any other body of persons.

The Gazette contains the Address, which is now for the first time reprinted.

“ *St. James’s, Oct. 6, 1762.*—This day the following Address was presented to his Majesty, and read by the Rev. William Langford, A. M. accompanied by a deputation from the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, introduced by the Lord of his Majesty’s Bed-chamber in waiting.

“ TO THE KING’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

“ Most gracious Sovereign,

“ We your Majesty’s ever faithful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, humbly beg leave to approach your royal presence with our unfeigned congratulations on the auspicious birth of a Prince, and the happy recovery of the Queen.

“ So great an accession to your Majesty’s personal and domestic felicity, inspires us with the warmest joy and calls for our abundant thankfulness to the divine Providence, which, in thus augmenting your private happiness and that of your most amiable Consort, hath added fresh security to the public welfare; and afforded us the pleasing prospect that the inestimable blessing, which the nation derives from your Majesty’s wise and gracious government, will be transmitted through your Majesty’s descendants to the latest generation.

“ If any thing could add to our satisfaction on so delightful

* This was, reckoning by the old style, the day of Queen Anne’s death.

His Majesty's Reply.

[1762.]

an occasion, as the birth of an heir apparent to the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, it would be that his Royal Highness *was born on a day, which the Protestant Dissenters have always commemorated with the highest pleasure, and distinguished by the most ardent gratitude to heaven, a day that introduced your Majesty's family to the throne of these realms,* and with it a period of happiness private and public, civil and religious, which the country never before enjoyed, and which we trust in God will, under your Majesty and your illustrious successors, be continued and increased.

“It is our united and fervent prayer to the King of Kings, that the life and health of the Prince of Wales may be preserved, and that by the blessing of the Almighty on your Majesty's paternal instruction and engaging example, and the tender care of the Queen, his Royal Highness may grow up to the possession of every amiable and useful accomplishment, so as to become in his day, the friend of religion and virtue, the patron of genius, learning, and knowledge, the guardian of liberty, the triumph of Britain, and the delight of human kind. And when you, Great Sir, shall have arrived to the fulness of years, prosperity and glory, then, and not till then, may he succeed to the same honours, and reign with equal dignity, happiness, and renown.

“To which Address his Majesty was pleased to return the following most gracious answer:—

“This dutiful Address and your warm congratulations on an event which so mainly concerns my private happiness and the welfare of my kingdom, are extremely agreeable to me. These repeated proofs of your zeal for my person and government, cannot fail to insure to you the continuance of my protection.

“They all had the honour to kiss his Majesty's hand; and were admitted to see the Prince of Wales.”*

* His present gracious Majesty George IV. whom may God, in his great mercy, long preserve.

1763.]

Address on the Restoration of Peace.

The restoration of peace to England and Europe the next year, was seized as a suitable occasion by our excellent forefathers, to present another address to the throne. In this they deprecate war, and give some strong intimations of the necessity for reform in the state of society: infidelity and profaneness being at that period very rife in the nation.

From the Gazette, this Address and his Majesty's remarkable reply are extracted, in which he graciously repeats the declaration of his protection, and his "*care to maintain the toleration.*"

"*St. James's, June 15, 1763.*—This day the following Address was read and presented to his Majesty by Dr. King, accompanied by a Committee from the Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster.

"Most gracious Sovereign,

"Your Majesty's ever loyal and faithful subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, humbly beg leave to congratulate your Majesty on the restoration of peace to your own dominions, and to the world in general: an event truly interesting to all who are influenced by sentiments of humanity, and peculiarly to the Ministers of the Gospel of peace.

"The unparalleled success and glory which crowned your Majesty's arms, while they excited our gratitude to the Almighty, could not suppress our concern for the numberless calamities and disorders inseparable from war. As these are happily brought to a period, we can now indulge the delightful expectation that the advancement of piety and virtue, of civil and religious liberty, and of those arts which improve and embellish human life, will be the result of public tranquillity, and the just praise of your Majesty's reign.

"The large accessions made to your Majesty's empire in America, not only promise an increase of commerce with its attendants, wealth, and power; but likewise open a way for diffusing freedom and science, political order, and Christian knowledge, through those extensive regions which are now sunk in supersti-

His Majesty's Answer.

[1763.]

tion and barbarism, and for imparting, even to the most uncultivated of our species, the happiness of Britons.

“ Great Sir,

“ The Protestant Dissenters have been ever strongly attached to those excellent Princes, your Royal progenitors, *having always considered the Revolution as the glorious era of Liberty in these kingdoms, and the succession in your august house as under God its firmest establishment.* And the goodness of your Majesty's heart, your high sense of domestic virtue, and your avowed regard to religion, concur to heighten our zeal for the dignity of your crown and the prosperity of your government. It shall be our constant care to approve our loyalty and fidelity to your Majesty, by promoting concord, and by recommending to those with whom we are connected, such principles as are calculated to render them at once good subjects and good men.

“ We have only to add our fervent supplications to the Most High, that your Majesty may reign long, the father of a free, and the delight of a happy people; and that the imperial crown of these realms may descend in your illustrious line to the latest generations.

“ To which Address his Majesty was pleased to return this most gracious answer :—

“ I thank you for this affectionate and dutiful address. You judge rightly of my desire and intention to improve the blessings of peace which God has granted us, to the universal benefit of my subjects, and to the advancement of religion and virtue. Your resolution to inculcate the principles of piety and loyalty are very agreeable to me; and you may rely on my protection and my care to maintain the toleration.

“ They were all most graciously received, and had the honour to kiss his Majesty's hand.”

The foregoing addresses and the royal answers to them, shew the constitutional loyalty of the Dissenters, and the high estimation in which they were held by the monarch.

1763.]

List of Churches.

The following list of Churches is compiled chiefly from one which was printed by the managers of the Baptist fund in London in the year 1763, and from a manuscript of Mr. John Ryland, in 1753. I have also derived assistance from the MSS. of Mr. Joshua Thomas, and from an appendix to the Memoirs of Mr. John Hirst of Bacup, by Mr. Hargreaves of London. The letters too received from my brethren in the ministry, containing the histories of the churches of which they are the pastors, have contributed essentially towards it. After all, I suppose it is defective. It should appear there were at that time about 200 churches in England.

LONDON AND MIDDLESEX.

Goat Street.	John Gill, D. D.
Curriers Hall.	John Brine.
Little Wild Street.	Samuel Stennett, D. D.
Maze Pond.	Benjamin Wallin.
Unicorn Yard.	William Clark.
Devonshire Square.	John Stephens.
Prescott Street.	Samuel Burford.
Little Alie Street.	James Fall, Jun.
Eagle Street.	Andrew Gifford, D. D. F. R. S.
Great East Cheap.	Samuel Dew.
Curriers Hall,	William Townsend. { Thomas Llewelin, L. L. D. { Josiah Thompson, Sen.
Sabbatarian Church.	
First Day Church.	

BEDFORDSHIRE.

Bedford.*	Joshua Symonds.
Steventon.	Joseph Clayton.
Sharnsbrook.	Thomas Newton.

* This church should never have been reckoned as of the Baptist denomination, as it was formed upon the principle that piety, and not baptism, was to be the term of communion: at this time, the majority were Baptists, as was the Pastor.

List of Churches.

[1763.]

BEDFORDSHIRE, continued.

Evershot.	William Wills.
Dunstable.	William Worster.
Cranfield.	— —
Maulden.	— —
Cotton-end.	— —

BERKSHIRE.

Newbury.	William Lewis.
Reading.	Thomas Whitewood.
Wantage.	— Beaseley.
Abingdon.	Daniel Turner.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Chesham.	Samuel Sleaf.
Chenies	— Stone.
Olney.	William Walker.
Colnbrook.	Isaac Woodman.
Newport Pagnell.	— —

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Cambridge.	Robert Robinson.
Soham.	John Eve.

CHESHIRE.

Chester.*	John Taylor.
Brassey Green.	William Smith.
Bolington.	Thomas Thomason.
Nantwich.	John Pyne.
Hill Cliff.	Samuel Wainright.

CUMBERLAND.

Whitehaven	John Huddleston Hall.
Carlisle.	{ — Ferney.
	{ — Gardiner.

* It is *Cheshire* in the copy, probably misspelt for Chester.

1763.]

List of Churches.

DEVONSHIRE.

Kingsbridge.	Crispin Curtis.
Plymouth.	Philip Gibbs.
Collumpton.	Nicholas Gillard.
Upottery.	Isaac Hann.
Tiverton.	Thomas Lewis.
Exeter.	Edmund Jones.
Loughwood.	Samuel Burford.
Grittleton.	William Plummer.

DORSETSHIRE.

Lyme.	Benjamin Tresser.
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DURHAM.

Sunderland.	— —
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ESSEX.

Potter Street.	John Nottage.
Waltham Abbey.	— Author.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Fairford.	Thomas Davis.
Horseley.	Benjamin Francis.
Painswick.	Thomas Jones.
Cirencester.	{ Thomas Flower, Jun.
	{ John Reynolds.
Hilsley.	— —
Sodbury.	— —
Bourton.	Richard Strange.
Upton.	Philip Jones.
Tetbury.	Nathaniel Overbury.
Chalford.	Daniel Hill.
Wootton-under-edge.	Richard Tipping.
Kingstanley.	— —
Tewkesbury.	John Haydon.
Cheltenham.	John Reynolds.
Gloucester.	Thomas Flower, Jun.

List of Churches.

[1763.]

HEREFORDSHIRE.

Leominster.	Joshua Thomas.
Weston.	— Roberts.
Ryford.	Walter Hill.

HAMPSHIRE.

Whitchurch.	Charles Cole.
Southampton. }	James Fanch.
Lockerley. }	
Portsmouth.	{ John Lacey.
	{ Daniel Whitehood.
	{ Samuel Meadows.
Lymington.	John Voysey.
Christchurch.	— —
Romsey.	Josiah Nike.
Ringwood.	— —
Newport, Isle of Wight.	John Mercer.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

Hitchen.	Samuel James.
Hempstead.	Clendon Dawkes.
St. Albans.	John Gill.
Watford.	James Fall.
New Mill, near Tring.	Richard Sutton.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

Great Gunsden.	— Keymour.
Little Staughton.	— —
Hale Weston.	— Joyce.

KENT.

Smarden.	Thomas Birch.
Seven Oaks.	Michael Blyth.
Ashford.	— —
Folkestone.	— Davies.
Chatham.	— —
Tenterden.	— —
Swallows, near Margate.	Jonathan Purchis.

1763.]

List of Churches.

LANCASHIRE.

Lancaster.	— Huttard.
Rhode.	Samuel Deacon.
Lum, forest of Rossendale.	John Nuttal.
Tottlebank.	— Sedgfield.
Liverpool.	John Oulton, Sen.
Hawkeshead Hill.	{ — Johnson.
	{ — Coulthred,
Bacup.	Joseph Piccop.
Gildersome.	— Ackworth.
Rodhill End.	{ Richard Thomas.
	{ Adam Holden,
Blackburn.	James Miller.
Goodshaw Chapel, }	Colbrek Sugden.
Cowling Hill.	
Warford.	— —
Manchester.	— Winterbottom.
Bolland.	Samuel Ashworth.
Accrington.	— —

LEICESTERSHIRE.

Sheepshead.	William Christian.
Arnsby.	Robert Hall.
Sutton.	Isaac Woodman.*
Leicester.	— Gregory.
Foxton.	John Evans.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

Lincoln.	— Burroughs.
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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Middleton Cheney.	— Carpenter.
Northampton.	{ Henry Davis.
	{ — Tolley,

* I find his name at Leicester in 1753, he probably removed from thence to Sutton.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE continued.

Longbrickby.	Richard Hutchins.
Ringshead.	—— Tweltree.
Waldgrave.	Moses Deacon.
Kettering.	John Brown.

NORTHUMBERLANDSHIRE.

Hexham.	Thomas Blackett.
—— Second Church.	David Ferney.
Newcastle.	—— —
Weston.	Sedgfield, Senior.

NORFOLK.

Norwich.	—— Steene.
Great Ellingham.	William Dunkhorn.
Downham.	William Watts.
Worsted.	{ Edward Trivett.
	{ Samuel Brooks.
Ingham.	Alexander Sparkall.
Yarmouth.	William Coles.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

North Collingham.	—— —
Nottingham.	Daniel Fletcher.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Hooknorton.	Benjamin Whitmore.
Chalfont.	—— —
Coate.	Joseph Stennett.
Combe.	Thomas Craner.
Middleton Cheney, } near Banbury. }	—— Carpenter.

SURRY.

Guildford.	John Chamberlain.
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1763.]

List of Churches.

SUFFOLK.

Ipswich.	Samuel Lowden.
Beccles	— Simmons.

SUSSEX.

Rye.	Christopher Hall.
Rushall.	— —
Markfield.	William Christian.

SHROPSHIRE.

Shrewsbury.	Charles Rogers.
Bridgenorth.*	— Thomas.
Braseley.	John Waine.
Ludlow.	— —
Bevesley.	— —

SOMERSETSHIRE.

Yeovil.	Peter Evans.
Wellington.	Robert Day.
Chard.	{ Samuel George.
	{ Isaac Wood.
Horsington and Knowle.	— —
Moreton Hampstead.	John Knight.
Frome.	{ — Henwood.
	{ Abraham Larwell.
Bristol—Broadmead.	{ Bernard Fosket.
	{ John Beddome.
	{ Hugh Evans.
— Pithay.	{ John Thomas.
	{ John Needham.
	{ — Anstre.
Hanham.	— Sheppard.
Bath.	Robert Parsons.

* John Ling was here before 1753.

List of Churches.

[1763.]

WILTSHIRE.

Crockerton.	John Clarke.
Woodrow.	John Harris.
Calne.	Jonathan Watts.
Bratton.	—— Weston.
Downton.	—— ———
Melksham.	—— ———
Salisbury.	—— Blake.
Trowbridge.	George Wickenden.
Bradford.	Richard Haynes.
Devizes.*	—— ———
Malmsbury.	—— ———
Woolaston.	—— ———
Westbury.	—— ———
Westbury Leigh.	John Marshman.
Frome.	—— Sedgfield. †

WARWICKSHIRE.

Coventry.	—— ———
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WORCESTERSHIRE

Bromsgrove.	James Butterworth.
Upton.	Philip Jones.
Bewdley.	James Kettleby.
Warwick.	—— Knight.
Worcester.	—— ———
Pershore.	John Ash, LL. D.
Bengeworth.	Jacob Mowen.
Birmingham	James Turner.
Alcester.	John Overbury.
Rusden.	William Knowles.
Dudley.	William Bloomer.
Westmancoate.	—— ———

* Benjamin Fuller died 1753. † One of Mr. Bernard Foskitt's pupils.

1763.]

Low State of the Denomination.

YORKSHIRE.

_____	Robert Ashworth.*
Haworth.	John Hartley.
Shipley.	_____
Barnoldswick.	Alvey Jackson.
Wainsgate.	Richard Smith
_____	Richard Thomas.
Halifax.	Joshua Ward.
Bridlington.	Thomas Wilbraham.
Sutton.	_____
Hull.	_____ Palmer.
Yelding.	Jonathan Brown.
Rawden.	John Bulton.
Bradford.	William Crabtree.
Salenden Nook.	Henry Clayton.
Juniper Dye-house.	_____

PERSONS AND PLACES UNKNOWN.

_____	Gardiner.
_____	McGowan.†.
_____	John Reynolds.
Broadwin.	William Stanger.
Inkburrow.	_____ Glover.

The churches at this time, as to the number of members, were small, probably not more than fifty upon an average. Mr. Ryland, in the manuscript referred to, considered there were not more than that number in the London churches, but this I am persuaded was incorrect; the size of the meeting houses, however, at that time, affords proof that the congregations were by no means large. What then must have been the general condition of our churches throughout the kingdom, when there were but a few berries upon the most fruitful boughs!

Let the reader consider, too, that at that period there were no Lord's-day evening lectures; no Sunday Schools attached to any of our churches; no Home, Irish, or Foreign Missionary Socie-

* Place unknown.

† At some church in the Worcester association.

ties; no village preaching—no Tract—no Bible Societies. The Baptist fund in London for relieving ministers who had not sufficient incomes, and the Bristol fund for a similar purpose were the only societies which exclusively belonged to the denomination: though the Baptists were united with the Presbyterians and Independents in support of the “Widow’s Fund” and the “Society for propagating Religious Knowledge among the Poor.”

The Baptist monthly meeting in London seems to have been carried on with some spirit: several of the sermons, chiefly those which were preached by the Rev. Messrs. Brine and Gill, were printed “at the request of an assembly of ministers and churches.” It is proper to say that these discover a considerable degree of talent, and a correct abstract delineation of the doctrines of grace; but as to any appeals being made to the consciences either of sinners or saints, or warnings and exhortations to believers, so far as I have had an opportunity of consulting them, they are very deficient, indeed almost totally destitute.

The Rev. Mr. Brine published a sermon with the following title, “Sin reigns not nor shall reign in the Saints: a Discourse delivered at a Monthly Exercise of Prayer, with a Sermon, April 20, 1764. Published at the request of ministers and gentlemen who heard it.” This is founded upon Rom. vi. 14: “*For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*” The particulars discussed are, 1. “An express assertion concerning sin, with respect to the believing Romans, 2. That they were not under the law. 3. That they were under grace. From both which it may justly be inferred, that sin should not have dominion over them.”

I shall only extract part of the application of the subject; which is called “important observations.”

“The doctrine of the grace of God is to be preached for the encouragement and consolation of those who are mourning under a sense of the being and power of sin in them. They are the only persons that have a right to evangelical consolation. Such who are insensible of their guiltiness, pollution and misery, have no title to that consolation which is provided in the gospel. The absolute freedom and sovereignty of the love of God

1766.]

Monthly Meeting Sermons.

ought to be clearly explained, and solidly proved for the comfort of the saints, who sometimes mourn greatly under a deep sense of their unworthiness. Its immutability should be demonstrated. And the glorious designs of divine grace concerning believers must be unfolded, for the confirmation of their faith and the help of their joy. They must be informed, that the grace of God eternally resolved upon their complete deliverance from sin and all its consequences, and determined to make them perfectly holy and invariably happy for ever. And we must acquaint them that, as in their regeneration grace was effectual to take away the dominion of sin in their hearts, it will certainly be effectual unto the utter ruin of it in the issue, which is what they earnestly desire. Then will the days of their mourning be ended, and their joys be full and perpetual. Thus we must comfort those who mourn in Zion, to whom God will appoint to give unto them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

In this sermon there are no exhortations to the mortification of sin, nor any intimation that perseverance in holiness was an essential evidence of an interest in the promised blessings of grace; nor any sentiments like those of the apostle, Heb. iii. 12, 14: "*Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*"

The Rev. Dr. Gill published a sermon soon after, entitled "The necessity of Christ's making Satisfaction for Sin, proved and confirmed, in a Sermon preached June 19, 1766, to an Assembly of Ministers and Churches at the Rev. Mr. Burford's Meeting House in Goodman's Fields. Published at request." The text is Heb. ii. 10: "*For it became him, for whom are all things,*" &c. The following extract is all that is in the form of application to the hearers. "And here let me observe to you something relating to experience, which you would do well to lay up in your minds; it may be of use to you hereafter, when you may be tempted to doubt of your interest in Christ's satisfaction. Have

you any reason to believe that you have, at any time, had communion with God, in private or in public, in your closet, or in the family, or in the house of God, under any ordinance, either the ministry of the word, or prayer, or the supper of the Lord? then you may be assured Christ has made satisfaction for you; or you would never have enjoyed such communion." The closing remarks are thus expressed:—"To close with a word or two:

"1. We may learn from hence the vile nature of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of it, what an evil and bitter thing it is; that nothing can make atonement and give satisfaction for it, but the bloodshed, sufferings, and death of Christ.

"2. We may observe the strictness of divine justice, that would make no abatement, but insisted upon Christ's doing and suffering all that the law could require to make satisfaction for the sins of his people; and if it spared not the Son of God standing in their room and stead, but demanded and had full satisfaction at his hands, it will not spare Christless sinners, who have no interest in his satisfaction; and what a fearful thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God! the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right!

"3. Let us admire and adore the perfections of God, his wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, as well as his love, grace, and mercy, which shine so gloriously in this affair of satisfaction and reconciliation for sin made by the blood of Christ; *"for it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."*

In this extract we find "Christless sinners" mentioned; but they are neither warned to "flee from the wrath to come," nor "persuaded by the terrors of the Lord, to turn to the strong hold as prisoners of hope," nor "in Christ's stead" besought by the ministry of reconciliation to be "reconciled to God." All that is said of them (nothing is said *to* them) is, that "they had no interest in the satisfaction of Christ; and what a fearful thing it would be to fall into the hands of the living God; the Judge of all the earth, who would do right."

If this manner of preaching the gospel be compared with that

1769.]

Religious Intolerance.

of Christ and his apostles the discrepancy will obviously appear. Can any one wonder if the scriptural means to be employed for the conversion of sinners were not adopted, that there was no exclamation to be heard in the churches, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?" Isa. lx. 8. The wonder is not that the churches did not increase, but that they continued to exist when the commission of Christ was not observed, when the example of Christ was not imitated.

In the year 1767, the important case of Allen Evans, Esq. at that time a member of the Baptist church in Barbican, recorded at some length in our last volume, was decided in favour of the Protestant Dissenters against the city of London. See from page 283 to 287.

There happened an instance in the year 1769, which shews a spirit of intolerance towards the Baptists. A clergyman in the county of Durham refused to marry a couple, because, having been born of Baptist parents, they had not been sprinkled in infancy. The young people finding the clergyman inexorable, and imagining they had no appeal, went to Scotland and were married. The priest, however, resolved not to lose his fees, and therefore, on their return home, he demanded to be paid for a duty which he had refused to perform. On the parties refusing to pay, the avaricious persecuting priest actually instituted proceedings against them in the spiritual court. The utility of the society of deputies in London was now proved: on their interference for the protection of the oppressed and conscientious Baptists, the rapacious priest dropped the proceedings.* †

* Proceedings of deputies, page 44.

† Some Clergymen in Wales have recently refused to marry unbaptized persons, and have also objected to bury the deceased infants of Baptists on the ground of their being excluded by the ritual of the established church as unbaptized persons. It has been to the honour of several of the bishops that they have reprimanded their clergy for such brutality; but the fault is in the canons of the church, which sanction it. An instance has lately occurred at Bridgenorth, in Shropshire. The parents, though Baptists, went one part of the day to church; they had lost an infant: a vault was made in the church to receive its body, by the consent of the church wardens; but when the parson found that the infant was

The year 1770 is distinguished in the annals of our denomination as the period when "the Baptist Education Society" was formed in aid of the Baptist Academy in Bristol. The design of the founder, Dr. Caleb Evans, is thus expressed:—

"That dissenting congregations, especially of the Baptist denomination in any part of the British dominions, may, if it please God, be more effectually supplied with a succession of able and evangelical ministers, and that Missionaries may be sent to those places where there is an opening for the gospel."

Numerous Ministers, and some of them of respectable character and talent, had been educated at Bristol before this period under the Rev. Bernard Foskitt, and the Rev. Hugh Evans. The enlargement of the Institution, however, has led to many important results, so that the pious wishes of Dr. C. Evans have been fully realized; and in regard to Missionaries to the Heathen, they have been trained up there to an extent which it is probable he never anticipated. He could not have thought that a person, who would only receive lessons occasionally, would be sent to the East Indies, and there become the translator of the Scriptures into the language of the Chinese, and the principal founder of an Asiatic College: but these objects have been accomplished chiefly by the influence and labours of the Rev. Dr. Joshua Marshman. A still more useful Missionary, the late Rev. John Chamberlain, was also educated at Bristol, as have very many besides, who have been faithful and successful Ministers of Christ to the Heathen World,

There is a great paucity of information in regard to the state of our Churches for the first ten years of this period, and it is useless to hazard conjectures on the subject. It is presumed they were far from being in prosperous circumstances.

Some of the Dissenting Ministers had found the subscription required from them, by the Act of Toleration, to some of the articles of the church of England a grievous yoke; especially as those among

not baptized he refused to bury it. They had no alternative but getting a new vault made in the Baptist meeting-house. It is astonishing that Baptists run the risk of being thus insulted by clergymen of the established church, when they are at liberty to bury where they please

1772.]

Application to Parliament.

them who did not cordially believe the doctrinal articles were excluded from all the benefits of the Act of Toleration, and subjected to the most grievous restrictions, and liable to severe punishment by fines and imprisonment.* Dissenting school-masters also were exposed to the penalties of severe persecuting enactments, as they were not comprehended in the Act of Toleration.

In the year 1772 a singular circumstance occurred. A number of clergymen met at the Feathers Tavern, Fleet Street, for the purpose of petitioning parliament to be relieved from clerical subscription: they had conformed to the external rites of the established church, but they disbelieved its doctrines. Their petition, though subscribed by several hundreds, was vigorously opposed, and was ultimately rejected by the parliament.

It was this measure that set the dissenting ministers upon adopting a similar course. I find that in March 4, 1772, a meeting of the General Body of Ministers was held for the purpose of considering the subject of subscription. At this meeting there were fifty ministers present, who, with one exception, agreed to the following resolutions:—"That the taking off the subscription required of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, and the obtaining relief for tutors and schoolmasters are very desirable and important objects:—That application should be made to parliament for these purposes; and that a committee should be chosen to manage the affair, with power to summon the general body as they should see occasion. A committee was formed consisting of fifteen out of the three denominations, and one minister of each denomination was deputed to consult with the deputies for defending the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters respecting it. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Stennett was appointed on behalf of the Baptists.

The ministers accordingly resolved, with the hearty concurrence of the deputies, to apply to parliament with the proposal, that instead of their subscribing the articles, they should in future

* In addition to fines, &c. they were exposed to banishment also; and if they administered the Lord's Supper, they were subjected to an additional fine of £100. of which the informer was to receive £25. on conviction.

make the following declarations:—"That we believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, and that we receive them as the rule of our faith and practice." In the month of April a bill was brought into the House of Commons by Sir Henry Houghton "for the further relief of Protestant Dissenters." This was seconded by Sir George Saville. The measure was approved by the administration, who gave it their support and bore ample testimony to the loyalty and affection of the Dissenters; so that it passed the House of Commons. In the upper house it was zealously supported by the Lords Mansfield, Camden, Chatham, Shelburne, &c. but notwithstanding was lost by a majority of 86 to 28. Besides the Lords above-mentioned there divided in favour of the Dissenters, five Dukes, one Marquis, seven Earls, two Viscounts, five Lords, and the Bishop of Lincoln.* The editor of the parliamentary debates of that period says, "It is no reflection to say, that the ability of the speakers and the force of argument were on the side of the Bill."

The effort was renewed the next year; but being fiercely opposed by the Bishops, it was again rejected. It was on this occasion the great Lord Chatham so nobly defended the Dissenting Ministers. Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, had charged them with being men of close ambition, &c. To this Lord Chatham replied, "This is judging uncharitably, and whoever brings such a charge without evidence defames!" Here this enlightened statesman paused for a moment, and then proceeded: "The Dissenting Ministers are represented as men of close ambition: they are so, my Lords; and their ambition is to keep

* This was Dr. Green. The following anecdote is told in relation to this affair, with what degree of probability the reader must decide:—"To the honour of Green, Bishop of Lincoln, let it be remembered, that he dared to stand alone; though he suffered for his scrupulosity and hardihood. When a certain peer mentioned his name to the King, who had kept the Dissenters at an awful distance, and expressed his frequent disapprobation of their cause, 'Green, Green, said this sacred person, he shall never be translated!' Accordingly Green never stirred from Lincoln." *Dyer's Life of Robinson*, p. 78.

1773.]

Subscription to Articles.

close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; and to the doctrines of inspired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a scriptural and spiritual worship; we have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy and Arminian Clergy. The Reformation has laid open the Scriptures to all; let not the bishops shut them again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded, which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said religious sects have done great mischief when they were not kept under restraints; but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling church."

The controversy which this subject of subscription occasioned, in regard to a refusal to sign the thirty-nine articles by the Dissenters, and the wish to be relieved from doing so expressed by so many of the Clergy of the establishment, spread both among Churchmen and Dissenters. The celebrated Robert Robinson employed his pen on the general subject of toleration, and in 1774 published a course of letters under the title of *ARCANA*, on the following subjects:—1. On Candour in Controversy. 2. On Uniformity in Religion. 3. On the Right of Private Judgment. 4. On Civil Magistracy. 5. On Innovation. 6. On Orthodoxy. 7. On Persecution. 8. On Sophistry. The question is not considered in these letters in reference to doctrine but to discipline. This work was much approved of among Dissenters; Dr. Furneaux (the antagonist who compelled Judge Blackstone to soften some of his severe remarks upon Dissenters) always spoke of the *ARCANA*, and of its author, with great respect. And in a letter written by the Rev. Daniel Turner, a Baptist Minister at Abingdon, about this time, it is said, "When I was informed that the *Arcana* was written by a Baptist Minister, I replied, No, it cannot be: we have not one among us who can write such a book as the *Arcana*."*

In the Year 1779, January 30, the bishop of Exeter, Dr. Ross, in his Sermon before the House of Lords, expressed his

* Dyer's Life of Robinson, p. 80—82.

wish that religious toleration were extended, and that Protestant Dissenters might have a legal security for the free exercise of their worship. This hint was not lost upon the Dissenters; and their friend Sir Henry Houghton, who on the 10th of March, proposed in the House of Commons, "That the House do resolve itself into a Committee, to consider of granting further relief to Protestant Dissenting Ministers and Schoolmasters." The motion was passed without a division in both houses, and was passed into a law with little opposition.

The Dissenting Ministers by this Act were required, instead of their subscribing the articles of the Established Church, to make the following declaration:—"I A. B. do solemnly declare in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian, and a Protestant, and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as commonly received among Protestant churches, do contain the revealed will of God; and that I do receive the same as the rule of my faith and practice."* The Dissenting schoolmasters were also relieved from the penalties to which they had been exposed for teaching youth, by daring to follow their profession without a license from the bishop of the diocese in which they resided, or by taking the sacrament at the church.

The Bill, as first introduced by Sir Henry Houghton in the year 1772, contained a clause which was afterwards expunged, but by whom does not appear. The reader will see its operation would have been most vexatious and oppressive. The celebrated Bill of Lord Sidmouth seems to have been framed upon the principle of this rejected clause, which was approved doubtless by many of the Dissenters, viz.* "That every person who

* The declaration as prepared by the Dissenters in 1772, was in the following words:—"I A. B. declare, as in the presence of Almighty God, that I believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, and that I receive them as the rule of my faith and practice." Mauduit's case of Ministers, p. 33.

† "Several think," says a writer in reply to Mr. Mauduit, "that those preachers (who have not had an *academical* education) are much affected by the bill; and that the *testimonial* required in it, has a direct, some

1773.]

Difference of Opinion.

shall offer to qualify himself as a Dissenting Minister at the General Session of the peace, shall, if thereunto required, produce to the Justices of the Peace at the said Sessions assembled, a testimonial signed by three or more Protestant Dissenting Ministers, and specifying places where they statedly officiate, in the words, or to the effect following, viz :—" We whose names are underwritten, being Protestant Dissenting Ministers, hereby certify, that we know A. B. and that, to the best of our knowledge, he is a person of good moral and christian character, and that we receive and acknowledge him as a Protestant Dissenting Minister.

" Witness our hand this day of "

The list of approved Ministers at that time amounted to ninety-five, and of these seventy had declared their approbation of this foolish measure: one only of the ministers present at the debate dissented from it.

The Baptists who were appointed to be of the Committee in 1772, were, Messrs. Stennett, Jefferies, Wallin and Thompson.

The difference of opinion that prevailed on this subject led to the publication of several pamphlets on both sides the question.* Those who opposed the application to parliament were evidently alarmed lest the petition should have arisen from an indifference to the *doctrines* of the gospel; many of its supporters being known to have embraced the Arian or Socinian schemes of Divinity.

That the reader may judge correctly of the reasons why this application was opposed, I am able to give it in their own words from a scarce pamphlet entitled, " Opposition opposed, or the Bedfordshire Minister's reasons for not joining (at their earnest solicitation) a Society at the New York Coffee House, London, in opposition to the late application to Parliament in favour of Dissenting Ministers and Schoolmasters," dated Ridgmont,

go so far as to say a *designed*, tendency to injure, if not to suppress them," p. 23.

* The Rev. Drs. Gibbon, Kippis, Stennett, and E. Redcliff wrote in favour of it.

Bedfordshire Resolutions.

[1773.]

Bedfordshire, Feb. 14, 1773. This was signed by W. Coles, W. Pike, W. Butfield, T. Marshall, E. Keach. The Resolutions adopted by them were the following:—

January 29, 1773.—Society of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, meeting at the New York Coffee House, Sweeting Alley, Cornhill, London.

“Whereas by an application to Parliament, by a number of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, who call themselves the General Body, praying for relief in the matter of subscription, which is intended to be renewed the present session of Parliament, we think it our indispensable duty to make this public declaration, that we are well satisfied with the present mode of qualification prescribed in the Act of Toleration, from a full conviction in our own consciences that the Articles of the Church of England, as now by Law established, are contained in the Holy Scriptures; as a proof whereof we have thought it necessary to publish our religious reasons for opposing the aforesaid application, which are as follows:—

“1st. Because, were the request of the aforesaid General Body (as they call themselves) granted, it would be going back to Popery, as it would set aside those essential doctrines contained in the Articles of the Church of England, on the faith of which the Reformation was founded.

“2nd. Because it would justify the Church of Rome in her opposition to the doctrines of the Reformation, as they in effect would be discarded, were the present mode of qualification set aside, and would reflect dishonour on the characters of those faithful Protestants who suffered martyrdom for the truths contained in those doctrines.

“3rd. Because it would tend to encourage the propagation of the principles of those persons who deny the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, and other important truths, and also frustrate the design of the legislature, in requiring a subscription to those articles in the Act of Toleration.

“4th. Because the excluding of subscription to the articles of the Church of England, and introducing the intended mode of qualification, viz.—“I believe that the Holy Scriptures of the

1773.]

Reasons for Application to Parliament.

Old and New Testaments contain the mind and will of God, and that "I receive them as the rule of my faith and practice," suggests that these Articles are not contained in the Scriptures.

"5th. Because the end proposed in the bill, would not be answered, namely, universal satisfaction, as a great number of Protestant Dissenters, Ministers and others, would be dissatisfied if the intended alteration were to take place.

"6th. Because it reflects dishonour on his Majesty and the present mild and happy administration, under which every Protestant Dissenter is protected from all persecution on a religious account.

"Lastly. Because it would give great offence to the Reverend Clergy of the Church of England, whose Petition of similar nature has been rejected.

"Published by order of the Committee, on behalf of the Society,

R. HUTCHINGS, Chairman.

I. LANGFORD, Secretary."

One of the writers in favour of the application was Dr. Samuel Stennett. An extract or two from his well written pamphlet will set the whole case before the reader. The Doctor says, "Now the present state of Dissenting Ministers is this. Many of them do not hold several doctrines contained in the Articles: others do believe them in the main, but not every part of them; and a considerable part of them do readily assent to them all: and some of these last, as well as the others, cannot conscientiously subscribe the Articles, as they apprehend the civil magistrate's requiring subscription to explanatory Articles of faith, to be an invasion upon the rights of conscience, and the sole authority of Christ as King in his church. So that the fact is, many cannot subscribe, and few, comparatively speaking, have subscribed. Now will any one say, that persons thus circumstanced, are guilty of any crime in not complying with the terms of the Toleration Act, or that for such conduct they really merit the vengeance denounced on them in the above mentioned statutes?"

The objectors, it has been seen, had stated there was no occa-

sion for the application, as the penal laws were not enforced against those who had not subscribed to the Articles. To this Dr. S. replies, "Real grievances there have been, and frequently are in the cases of Tutors and Schoolmasters, who have been proceeded against in the spiritual courts, till by the favour of the bishops, or by a *noli-prosequi* from the crown upon the removal of such causes into the temporal courts, these prosecutions have been stopped." The Doctor imputes to the opponents of the measure good motives for their conduct; he considers them influenced "by considerations either of conscience or prudence:" he adds, however, "It is therefore to be regretted that any among us should, by an injudicious timorous neutrality, forego the noble opportunity they had of doing honour to those sentiments they firmly believe and sincerely love."* Speaking of these Ministers, this same writer says, "Some good men among the Calvinists, who lamented the growth of error, and suspected that this application to parliament originated in an aversion to the doctrines contained in the thirty-nine articles, felt great pain, and thought they had a loud call in providence to oppose this measure: what are we, said they, to go to parliament, and hold a language which implies indifference to our religious principles? We are not weary of what we take to be the true gospel, and in defence of which our pious forefathers ventured their lives, we want no relief. Besides, where is the wisdom of our officiously coming forward, to remove out of the way of Socinians and Arians certain obstructions to the propagation of their dangerous errors, which others are to be accountable for, not we?"†

Dr. Stennett attempts to vindicate the testimonial in the proposed bill, but not in my opinion so successfully as he does other parts of the measure. The bill, as it ultimately passed, is

* One of the opponent writers says, "The *regium donum* gentlemen were the chief promoters of the address." In an advertisement appended he added, "Many have expressed a desire of knowing who are the *Royal Bounty* Ministers: he then gives their names, Messrs. Pope, Spilsbury, Langford, Harris, (Presbyterians.) Webb, Gibbons, Toller, (Independents.) Stennet, (Antipædobaptist.)

† Dr. Stennett's Trip to Holyhead.

1773.]

Controversy on Terms of Communion.

I suppose now unobjectionable to all Protestant Dissenting Ministers and Schoolmasters, and was certainly a great addition to the rights and privileges granted and secured by the Act of Toleration.

The Rev. Joshua Toulmin, A.M. published at this time a work entitled "Two Letters on the late applications to Parliament of Protestant Dissenting Ministers." One of these was an address to the Dissenting laity, on the subject of the declaration proposed to be substituted in the room of subscription to the Church of England.

The controversy among the Baptists, on terms of communion, which had been asleep from the time of Bunyan and Kiffin, was about this time revived. The Rev. Messrs. Ryland, sen. of Northampton, Turner of Abingdon, and Robinson of Cambridge, had published several pamphlets to prove that unbaptized persons ought to be admitted to communion at the Lord's table in Baptist churches.* The Rev. Abraham Booth appeared as the Defender of those Ministers and Churches which were now first designated "*Strict Baptists.*" His work, which is

* The two first of these were anonymous, under the assumed names of *Pacificus* and *Candidus*. Considering the ordinance of Baptism unessential as a term of communion, they urged the propriety of *forbearance* for the sake of peace. This is the only plausible ground on which the dispensing with baptism can be urged. Let it only be *proved* that neither by our Lord, nor his apostles, baptism was enjoined as a duty previous to church fellowship, and the pleas for the duty of forbearance among Christians are irresistible! Mr. Robinson's work was entitled, "The General Doctrine of Toleration, applied to the particular case of Free Communion, printed in 1771." But, if *baptism* be the first act of homage to his Lord which a believer in Christ is to manifest; if all the apostolic churches were composed exclusively of baptized persons; and if ministers and churches now are bound to imitate the practice of the apostles, and to conform to the pattern of the apostolic churches, then this argument is of no weight. It must be shewn that in cases relating to positive institutions of Jesus Christ there is a scriptural warrant for dispensing with a matter of Christian obedience, before any can be justified in departing from what was plainly the custom of the primitive churches, which were founded in strict accordance with the directions given by the Lord Jesus.

Booth's Pædobaptism Examined.

[1784.]

an elaborate performance and a fine piece of polemical reasoning, was a reply to the works of the two former ministers, and was entitled an "Apology for the Baptists; in which they are vindicated from the charge of laying an unwarrantable stress on the ordinance of Baptism." His masterly work received no reply from his brethren (whom in return for their new coined epithet he designated *Latitudinarian* Baptists,) and at that time put an end to the controversy. From one who was not favourable to his opinions, and who was then writing on a subject which would lead him to feel strongly, it is said, "Mr. Booth, in his apology for the Baptists, shews that he possesses the powers of close reasoning from his own principles." *

Mr. Booth published his elaborate work on Baptism in two volumes, in 1784, entitled "Pædobaptism examined on the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings, of the most learned Pædobaptists." An extract from the preface will shew his object:—"Having observed for a course of years that many of the most learned and eminent Pædobaptists, when theological subjects are under discussion, frequently argue on such principles, admit of such facts, interpret various texts of Scripture in such a manner as are greatly in favour of the Baptists, I extracted a number of passages from their publications, and made many references to others which I thought might be fairly pleaded against infant sprinkling. On reviewing these quotations and *memoranda* I concluded, merely for my own private use, to employ some leisure hours in transcribing them under the different heads of the Pædobaptist controversy." In reply to this a work appeared on the principles of Pædobaptism by the Rev. Edward Williams, of Oswestry, "entitled *Antipædobaptism Examined*," &c.

Mr. Booth did not regard Mr. Williams's work as being entitled to any reply; but a circumstance occurred which led him in 1792 to publish a most laboured and logical answer to it, which he entitled "A Defence of Pædobaptism Examined; or Animadversions on Dr. Edward Williams's *Antipædobaptism Examined*."

* Dyer's Life of Robinson, p. 295.

1792.]

His Reply to Dr. Williams.

An extract from the preface to this last volume will give the reader a view of the circumstances alluded to, which led to its publication:—"The performance of my opponent having made its appearance, I purchased and perused it with care. But though I plainly perceived, in *Antipædobaptism Examined*, a variety of moral ideas expressed with an air of confidence; yet not considering the general principles on which my reasoning in *Pædobaptism Examined* proceeds, as being in the least perverted, nor my arguments on those principles as having received even a *plausible* answer, I resolved to make no reply. Such was my unwavering determination for more than two years; and in that determination I should probably have still continued, had it not been for credible intelligence which struck me as very extraordinary.

"A gentleman in the country, who is professedly of the Baptist persuasion, sent me a letter, in which he informed me of a friendly interview that he had with Mr. (now Dr.) Edward Williams, and of some particulars which passed relative to *Pædobaptism Examined*. Among other things he mentioned the following:—"Mr. Williams said, Mr. Booth *confessed that his book was unanswerable*. At this I was much surprised, and immediately asked, Why then does not Mr. Booth declare for Infant Baptism? Mr. Williams replied, *The disadvantages attending an open declaration of sentiments, render it inexpedient and imprudent to do so at all times:—or to that effect.*"

"On reading this I paused—I paused—I was astonished! and said within myself, Of what superlative excellence in the estimation of its author must *Antipædobaptism Examined* be possessed! What a compliment he pays to my integrity! If my opponent, when conversing with one whom he knew to be an avowed Baptist, cannot restrain the ebullitions of self-gratulation relative to his performance, nor forbear exclaiming, *Io triumphe!* in what sublime strains of self-complacency, and in what an ample manner, must he express himself when conversing with his Pædobaptist brethren! It is time for me to put an absolute negative on his totally unfounded assertion, to chastise his unparalleled vanity, and to vindicate my integrity against his implicit, but odious charge!"

Number of Baptist Churches.

[1775.]

It was a curious remark made on the first appearance of *Pædobaptism Examined* in the *Monthly Review* for September 1784, by a Mr. Badcock, who says, "He (Mr. Booth) sets his opponents together by the ears, and leads them to overthrow the very cause, in defence of which they professed to take the field." The Baptists confidently leave their cause, so far as human writings are concerned, to the reasonings and arguments of what they consider this unanswered and unanswerable work.

The following list of Dissenting Churches in England was communicated to Mr. Robert Robinson of Cambridge, February 24, 1775, by the Rev. Josiah Thomson of Clapham. It may be presumed, from the opportunities that minister had to collect information on the subject, that it was tolerably correct.

Counties.	Number of Churches.	Baptists.	Counties.	Number of Churches.	Baptists.
Bedfordshire	19	17	Lincolnshire	22	16
Berkshire	14	5	Middlesex	86	13
Buckinghamshire	25	15	Monmouthshire	13	6
Cambridgeshire	21	7	Norfolk	21	9
Cheshire	24	3	Northamptonshire	37	17
Cornwall	7	2	Northumberland	40	3
Cumberland	17	4	Nottinghamshire	19	10
Derbyshire	32	8	Oxfordshire	11	2
Devonshire	61	14	Rutlandshire	5	3
Dorsetshire	24	1	Shropshire	11	3
Durham	15	3	Somersetshire	53	15
Essex	49	15	Staffordshire	14	0
Gloucestershire	46	21	Suffolk	33	3
Hampshire	28	8	Surry	12	2
Herefordshire	9	3	Sussex	19	12
Hertfordshire	18	9	Warwickshire	23	10
Huntingdonshire	15	7	Westmorland	3	0
Kent	46	39	Wiltshire	39	19
Lancashire	62	13	Worcestershire	16	7
Leicestershire	39	23	Yorkshire	70	20

The church at Cambridge, under the pastoral superintendence of Mr. Robinson, consisted of one hundred and twenty members and six hundred hearers. The church at Soham, under the pastorate of Mr. Andrew Fuller, consisted of one hundred hearers; how many members is not recorded. From the comparative numbers of these two churches some idea may be formed of the

1777.]

County Associations.

aggregate number of the Baptist denomination in England at that period, consisting of some large places, like that at Cambridge, and others small, like that at Soham.

The Baptist Churches, have from their earliest history, united in County or District Associations. It has been, and is, the practice of these associated churches, each one to address an annual letter to the united body when assembled. In the year 1777, that in the district of Mr. Robinson's church met at Cambridge on the 13th and 14th of May. A letter was written by Mr. Robinson to the association, with his characteristic pleasantry, on behalf the church, for it must certainly have been mere joking when he intimated his fear, and that of the church under his care, that "such associations were in the end productive of the great antichristian apostacy!" an association of congregational churches having no authority, and assuming none in their united capacity, one of the fundamental rules of which is, not even to *give advice* in the event of a church applying for it in cases of internal disputes, unless both parties agree in wishing the arbitration of the pastors and messengers assembled in association. But Mr. Robinson had such a hatred for popery and episcopacy, that he saw, or pretended that he saw, its ghost under every hedge; and seemed to be haunted by its spectre wherever he went. The following is his quaint letter:—

"The particular Baptist Church of Christ, at Cambridge, to the churches of the same faith and order in association at Cambridge, May 13th and 14th, 1777, wisheth grace and peace.

"Reverend and Dear Brethren,

"We beg leave to approach you in the most cordial affection, and to assure you; although we do not think ourselves worthy of the honour of receiving you under our roof, yet we rejoice in the privilege of which we are possessed by your doing so. We have therefore appointed Messrs. Foster and Hollick (the first one of our junior deacons, and the last one of our worthy auditors) to superintend this association, for the accommodation of the ministers, lest they should be hindered in prosecuting the

laudable design of their assembling; and for the provision of conveniences for our poor country members, lest they should be deprived of the benefit of attending.

“ We have also appointed our two senior deacons, Messrs. Tyson and Whitby, our messengers to accompany our pastor to this association. We bless God we are in peaceable, prosperous, and increasing circumstances as a church. We have much to lament, as individuals, and many things to amend, reform and improve, as a body; but our God is as good as he is great, and to him we look up for supply.

“ We look back with horror on those past times of persecution which denied our ancestors the liberty of publicly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. We still keep their original design in view, of reforming the church to its primitive simplicity; and we adopt this method of communion with other churches by annual association, as a branch of primitive religion, which, under the divine blessing, may be productive of great spiritual advantages to us and our posterity, unless our own folly defeat your good designs.

“ We confess, brethren, we entered this association with great jealousy and caution; for although we clearly saw the practice of associating, consulting, and mutually assisting in the purest ages of Christianity, yet we could not but recollect, that such associations were in the end productive of the great antichristian apostasy, an apostasy so fatal to the civil and religious liberties of mankind, and particularly to those of the brave old puritans and nonconformists, that the very words, synod, and session, council, and canon, yet make both the ears of a sound Protestant Dissenter to tingle. This branch of primitive godliness, we think, is not to be rejected; and we praise you, brethren, that you have precluded all complaints, silenced all our fears, and given us entire satisfaction on this article, by so fully and explicitly renouncing all kind of jurisdiction over conscience. We venerate the communion of the saints: and as you come by our own invitation, pretend to no authority over us, do not even take the liberty to interrogate us on any other articles than those which we choose to lay before you, and then offer

1779.]

New Era in Baptist History.

us advice, but not law; we bid you a Christian welcome, and bless God for granting us the honour and the pleasure of this interview.

“ Permit us, brethren, only to add, that since it is with newly incorporated societies as it is with young plants—and that ply may be given with a very little trouble at first, which no labour can produce afterward—we pray that a double portion of penetration and disinterestedness, unanimity and prudence, gentleness and benevolence, may be bestowed upon you; may your motives and aims still continue to be pure, and all your transactions be full of evidence of your pure intentions—may this—may every future association, be a new preparation for, and pleasing prelibation of that general association of the church of the first-born, to which, through grace, we hope shortly to come.

John Stanford.

“ *Cambridge, April 17, 1777.*—Second quarterly meeting, signed by order of all the church.”

The year 1779, on account of the following circumstance, was, I consider, the commencement of a new era in the history of our denomination. At a meeting of the Northamptonshire association held at Northampton at the Meeting House in College Lane, the Rev. Robert Hall of Arnsby preached from Isa. lvii. 14, “ Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people.”

This sermon he was requested to publish, and in the year 1781 he did so, in the form of an Essay entitled, “ Help to Zion’s Travellers; being an attempt to remove various stumbling blocks out of the way, relating to doctrinal and practical religion.”

The principles of this admirable little work were those of modern Calvinism in opposition to the system of high or hypercalvinism, which had so generally prevailed in our churches, chiefly in consequence of the preaching and writings of Messrs. Brine and Gill. It contained also a vindication of the genuine doctrines of the gospel from the objections of Socinians, Sabelians, Arminians, and Antinomians, and met with considerable

approbation from godly, judicious, and learned men of various Christian denominations.

In the year 1780, alarming riots took place in London, which presented scenes of confusion and horror not to be described. In consequence of some measures of relief towards the Roman Catholics having been adopted by the government, Protestant Associations were formed in London and throughout the kingdom. The almost incredible number of thirty thousand assembled in St. George's Fields, June 2, 1780, and accompanied Lord George Gordon to the House of Commons for the purpose of presenting the petition which they had adopted.

Lord George Gordon, it appears, had been an occasional hearer of the Rev. Mr. Martin in Grafton Street. "He earnestly entreated me," says Mr. Martin, "to take an active part in what he was pleased to call the Protestant Association." He said, "I should have a superior station in that numerous assembly. When he found me invincible to that sort of adulation, he waited on me at my own house, then in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, and left with me a pamphlet, and entreated I would read it, and made me promise to give him my sincere opinion of its contents in writing, the next morning. This pamphlet I read, and was much displeased with several things oddly huddled together in that inflammatory performance; I wrote therefore a very short letter to his lordship which, as I recollect, ended thus:—"I beg leave, my lord, to inform you, that my first concern on all these subjects is, to overcome evil with good, my second, not to be overcome with evil; and my final resolution is, not to do evil that good may come."

The Baptists at this time had one of their denomination in the House of Commons. This was Mr. Alderman Bull, one of the members of the City of London, who afterwards served the office of Lord Mayor.*

* Mr. Frederick Bull had been a member of the Baptist Church in Prescott Street, Goodman's Fields. He contributed in 1770 to the Bristol Education Society £150. and £5. 5s. annual contribution, and at his death the reversionary bequest of £1000.

In the year 1752 the church in Prescott Street being without a pastor,

1780.]

Speech of Alderman Bull.

The speech which was delivered by him in the house on the 20th of June, 1780, relative to the Protestant petitions, will give a correct view of what were the sentiments and feelings of that large body of persons who adhered to Lord George Gordon.

Mr. Bull thus spoke:—

“ Mr. Speaker,

“ I rise, Sir, to declare my most hearty concurrence with the *petitions* from the different *Protestant Associations*; and I am happy in having the sanction for this opinion from the corporation of which I have the honour to be a member, and in which there are a large number of my constituents.

“ It gives me pleasure to see, at length, a spirit of opposition to that encouragement which *popery* has been long receiving from the *servants of the crown*.

“ The establishment of that *sanguinary* and *intolerant* system of superstition in the province of *Quebec*, ought to have spread a general alarm throughout the nation; the *design* was too evident to be mistaken. The late toleration of popery within this realm, I firmly believe, is part of a deep laid *ministerial* plan, a plan which has for its objects the *destruction* of the liberties of the people, and the formation of an *arbitrary despotic govern-*

Mr. Aaron Ward, a bookseller, and Mr. Frederiek Bull, two of their most respectable members, were deputed to visit the Rev. Robert Day of Wallington, to request him to become their pastor. They used many entreaties with him to leave his people, but all in vain. The following anecdote is most amusing: “ Part of their conversation with him was in Mr. Day's garden near a malt-house, where one Joseph Charley overheard them saying, that his removal was a piece of justice which he owed to his family: that he would be much better provided for, &c. Joe listened till his patience was tired, and at last, greatly agitated, ran out to procure some of the friends to go directly and remonstrate with these strangers; but before he could get any body, he saw their horses led out, and that they were ready to mount: *now or never* was his motto, and in the plenitude of his zeal, Joe laid hold of the horses, one in each hand, and told the gentlemen that they were acting very much out of character to come and tempt their minister; that *the souls of the poor were of as much value as those of the rich*, and that *the robbers of churches were the worst of robbers*. Baptist Register, vol. i. p. 263.

ment. Popery is most favourable to this *design*, as passive obedience in the people, whenever the priest chooses to enjoin it, is, on pain of *eternal damnation*, one of its distinguishing peculiarities.

“ I would not be understood to be an advocate for *persecution*: I abhor the idea. It is not on account of *any* of the religious tenets of the papists that I object to their toleration; it is because they *cannot* give any security for their *civil* obedience under any *protestant* government whatever. To a *protestant* they are *devoted foes*. They are bound by every obligation, from their earliest infancy, to oppose what they call *heresy*, and to *destroy* those whom they call *hereticks*; that is, to destroy those who differ in opinion from them. And is this religion? No, Sir, it is *Priest-craft*, and *State-craft*; and opposition to a set of men holding such *horrid* opinions is not persecution, much less religious persecution; it is common prudence; it is benevolence to ourselves and our connections; it is self-defence, and ought to be supported by every one who is a friend to the *rights of mankind*.

“ What, Sir, was the conduct of our bishops and the clergy in the memorable year 1745. They were then indefatigable in warning the people to beware of popery, a religion (falsely so called) which had often deluged Europe in *blood*, and at that time had for its object the banishment of *our good old King* and his family, and the ruin of our free constitution: and what alteration has popery undergone since? The *pope* remains still supreme, the priesthood is the same, and the people are as fast held in delusion and obedience as ever; yet because the court and its dependants have thought proper to patronize popery, the *bishops* and the *clergy* are silent; and that religion which not forty years ago excited every *horror* in the people, without the least alteration in any one of its tenets, we are now persuaded to believe is perfectly harmless and deserving of our countenance and support;—an imposition this which may produce the most melancholy consequences.

“ We already hear of *popish* schools being opened to teach the children of the poor *gratis*, and of priests and jesuits *publicly* *proselyting* the people to that system which supplants

1780.]

Speech of Alderman Bull.

moral honesty in the world, and which tends to subvert the peace and order of society ; and what may not be the unhappy issue ? I fear it will terminate in the *despotism* of the *prince*, and the *slavery* of the *people*.

“ Those numerous protestants, who are now applying to this house, entertain the same apprehensions, and they are discharging their duty to themselves and their posterity, in beseeching us to take a serious review of the late act in favour of the papists, and to relieve the minds of those particularly who are under scruples respecting the oath of supremacy.

“ Sir, although the former petitions have been *spurned at* and *trampled upon*, through the *baneful influence* of the *crown*, I yet hope the house will comply with the prayer of *these* petitions without delay, lest not only the multitude lately at our doors, but the people at large, should suspect that, under the specious mask of moderation and tenderness for the papist, we have a *design* to *sacrifice* the valuable inheritance purchased by our ancestors, and the security of the *protestant* religion to the shrine of popery.

“ These are my sentiments, which are founded upon those most *unequivocal* of all arguments, *observation* and *experience*.”

It is added by those persons who procured the printing of this speech in a separate sheet, as if for extensive circulation, “ When Mr. Bull, in the most clear and deliberate manner, delivered the above speech in the house, about twelve o'clock, there was a profound silence throughout ; not a word was lost, nor was he called to order, nor threatened with a motion of committment if he proceeded. It is true he was violently attacked by Mr. Burke and Lord North, who really worked themselves up into such an extreme of passion as manifestly to injure the scope of their arguments ; and when his lordship declared he had never been so attacked before, Mr. Sawbridge remarked, ‘ No, my lord, not above once in every week during the session.’ ”

With the light we now have on the political question, in regard to popery, we may wonder at the alarm excited by the relief that was granted to the Roman Catholics. There was no

parallel between popery in England in 1780 and 1745. In the latter of these periods its design in favour of the Stuarts was unequivocally expressed by France; and all consistent protestants and constitutional Englishmen, identified protestantism and liberty with the support of the reigning family. But in 1780 it was merely the removal of the *penal statutes* which related to the *religious sentiments* of the Roman Catholics; and did not include any thing which conferred on them *political power*, or an eligibility to possess it. Had the arguments of Alderman Bull been employed to shew that England ought to profit by *observation* and *experience*, from the intolerance of papists, when in power, towards those whom they called heretics; and because their oath of allegiance to the pope prevented their giving full security for their civil obedience under any protestant government, they would have been unanswerable. But applied, as they were, to prevent *toleration* being granted towards them, they were of much less force. Let it however be recollected that his opinions were the arguments of *Milton*, and *Locke*, and *Somers*, on the subject; and of all those venerated names to whom we owe the glorious Revolution of 1688.

I find that in the year 1781 the celebrated Rev. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, had formed a design of establishing a Baptist college. It is said by his biographer, "Robinson was aware of the disadvantages under which his own party lay in this respect. It is true they have had among them a few persons, whose abilities and learning all parties are willing to acknowledge, such as Dr. Gale, Dr. Foster, and Dr. Gill. Dr. Gale was an eminent Greek scholar, and as a theologian acquired great reputation by his controversy with Wall; Foster was a modest and learned Socinian preacher; and Gill, the Calvinist preacher, was a profound Hebraist.

"But through their former depression, through their exclusion from public schools and Universities, the Baptists had possessed few distinguished scholars. For though Dr Ward,* a man him-

* Dr. John Ward was a member of the church in Little Wild Street, London. His father was named John Ward, a Dissenting Minister at Tysoe in Warwickshire, who died December 28, 1717. His son, the

1781.]

Plan of a Baptist College.

self of extensive literature, had settled a few exhibitions on their students at the University of Aberdeen; and though a house of literature was appropriated to their use at Bristol; yet the exhibitions to Aberdeen were very few; and the Bristol institution, as the late president, Dr. Evans, was willing to acknowledge, laboured under many defects. Robinson's wish was that his party might enjoy the literary advantages of an English University, without being subject to its theological shackles. He accordingly drew up a scheme and submitted it to some of the most wealthy and learned of them."

In two letters written this year to the Rev. Dr. Turner of Abingdon, Mr. Robinson says, "I have been thinking of your hints of an endowed college for Dissenting education, and wish you could think of any way to effect it. We want a college for law and physic, and for gentlemen of independent fortunes. Our interest has suffered much from this deficiency by the sons of such gentlemen being sent to our universities, who, of course, left us to go over to the church. This was the case of Lord Barrington, and several families in this neighbourhood. Mr. Atkins has a house near Wantage that would do; he might, if he would, endow it with a thousand a year; if you have opportunity, feel his pulse about the matter as fully as you can."

In another letter, he speaks as follows:—"In regard to the other article, literary foundation, our cause wants good sterling literature. Private schools have not academical advantages; Scotch Universities oblige us to exchange religion for learning: we value the last, but not so highly as to purchase it at such a price. I have supposed, if we could take about six boys, and educate them at Cambridge, so that they might have all the literary advantages of the university, without the shackles and vices, these boys might, in a few years, open a house of litera-

doctor, was a clerk in the navy office, which he left in 1710 for the purpose of pursuing his studies under Dr. Ker. In the year 1720 he was chosen Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in Gresham College. The University of Edinburgh conferred on him the degree of LL. D. in 1750. Dr. Samuel Stennett preached his funeral sermon, which was not printed. He left a large sum for educating Baptist students. See Appendix.

ture, and might educate two sorts of lads; poor boys by charitable subscription, and gentlemen's sons at their own expense. Such as were pious might be ministers; such as were not, might practise physic, law, &c. and save all that money to the cause, in a course of business, which now we pay churchmen for. I know a gentleman who would give books, manuscripts, &c. to such a house, worth £1000. Dr. Stennett says, they have the interest of two or three thousand pounds in the funds for purposes of education; and he will try to turn it into this channel, if it can be realised. Long have I wished to realise this."

In this year, Mr. Robinson was invited to spend some of his time in London for the purpose of collecting materials to complete a full and authentic history of the English Baptists. Dr. Andrew Gifford, who was one of the librarians of the British museum, offered him access to that extensive library, and manuscripts to assist him in the undertaking.

A committee was accordingly formed, and a meeting held at which Dr. Gifford presided, when the following resolutions were adopted:—"At a meeting at the King's Head in the Poultry, November 6, 1781, present, Rev. Dr. Gifford in the chair, Rev. Messrs. Ebenezer Smith, Samuel Rolls, Timothy Thomas, Henry Keene, Esq. Messrs. John Middleton, William Savill, Richard Lloyd, Robert Westley, Joseph Hughes, Thomas Pownall, Isaac Cotham, Benjamin Staley, and William Sabine. 1. Resolved, that a new History of the Baptists is a work much to be desired. 2. That the Rev. R. Robinson, of Chesterton, is a proper person to be invited to execute that work; the Rev. Dr. Gifford generously offering him an apartment in his house, for the inspection of manuscripts in the museum, and every other assistance in his power. 3. Resolved, that the Rev. Mr. Robinson be requested to come up to London, early in the week before the second Lord's day in every month, and stay till the latter end of the following week, for the purpose of collecting materials for the said work; also, that Mr. Robinson be requested to preach the lectures in London, every journey; and that the lectures be holden at different places, viz. at Dr. Gifford's the second Lord's day evening, and at Rev. Mr. Rippon's on the Tuesdays before and after, at the usual times of their

1788.]

Proceedings respecting the Slave Trade.

lectures. 4. Dr. Gifford consenting to invite Mr. Robinson to preach the said lectures at his place, resolved, that Mr. Keene and Mr. Westley be appointed to give an invitation to Mr. Robinson to preach the said lectures at his place. 5. That persons be invited to subscribe to the said lectures, in order to defray the expenses of Mr. Robinson's journeys. 6. That Mr. Robinson be paid five guineas every journey by the treasurer, to be appointed, and the overplues (if any) at the end of the year. 7. That Mr. Middleton be appointed treasurer. 8. That Mr. Keene be appointed to apply to Mr. Robinson, and his church, for their consent to the above, and to fix the commencement of the lectures. 9. That Mr. Keene and Mr. Middleton be appointed to conduct the business.

Mr. Robinson accordingly came to London at the time appointed, and attended occasionally at the museum to collect materials for the proposed history; but his frequent preaching and his visiting left him but little leisure for examining manuscripts and making extracts. He therefore soon returned to *Chesterton*, and in 1790, ten years afterwards, his large heterogeneous, and heterodox volume appeared, which he entitled, "A History of the Baptists!" &c.

In the year 1788 the subject of the slave trade very much agitated the nation. Several of the Baptist ministers preached on the occasion and published their sermons. The Rev. Mr. Booth is mentioned with honourable respect, in Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-trade, as one of its most early champions. The Rev. James Dore also distinguished himself on the same occasion. The celebrated Rev. R. Robinson published a sermon preached at Cambridge, February 10th, entitled, "Slavery inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity." It is said the first petition to the House of Commons was from Cambridge, and was drawn up by his pen. As this will give a correct view of the principles and feelings of the Baptists on that vile trade, I submit a copy of it to the reader.

"To the honourable the Commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled.

Petition from Cambridge.

[1788.]

“ The humble petition of the gentry, clergy, freeholders and others in the county of Cambridge, sheweth,

“ That your petitioners, understanding that the slave trade is likely to become a subject of parliamentary investigation, cannot help expressing their most earnest desire of a change in the present system of African trade.

“ Your petitioners are aware, that Britain derives innumerable benefits from her plantations, and that the plantations depend upon the labours of negroes ; but they are not convinced that a slave trade is necessary to a supply of labourers. They abhor slavery in every form, and that kind most of all which renders cruelty necessary to the safety of the slaveholders.

“ Your petitioners humbly represent, that a slave trade is neither just, nor safe, nor, in the present case, productive ; for it obstructs other branches of traffic, which promise far greater national advantages.

“ Nor can your petitioners help observing with sorrow, that a slave trade is a dishonour to humanity, a disgrace to our national character, utterly inconsistent with the sound policy of commercial states, and a perpetual scandal to the profession of Christianity.

“ Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray this honourable house to take the premises into consideration, and to grant such relief as they in their great wisdom shall see fit.

“ And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.”

The next year, 1789, Mr. Robinson caused a sensation among the managers of the Baptist fund in London, formed for assisting the poor ministers of Calvinistic principles, for whom, by a reference to our last volume, it will be seen that the fund was exclusively designed and provided. For the purpose of ascertaining that the applicants are particular or Calvinistic Baptists, they are required to send a confession of their religious principles, the trustees having no discretion on the subject. Mr. Robinson, however, contended that though the *funded* property could not be applied to any others, yet as the fund was annually augmented by voluntary subscriptions, that the sphere of its liberality should be enlarged. “ Why,” he said, “ should benevolence be confined to

1789.]

Baptist Fund.

a party? Why the *Christian* be overlooked and the *Calvinists* only regarded? To be in want," he said, "and to be a Christian, were sufficient qualifications to receive charity." The reader will instantly perceive the fallacy of this reasoning as regards the application of funds provided for ministers of a certain and defined description as to their theological sentiments. The fact was, Mr. Robinson had given sufficient cause to be suspected that he had himself given up Calvinism, and had manifested his zeal in attempting to draw away others from the orthodox faith. His biographer acknowledges, that about the year 1786 "Mr. Robinson used to speak concerning the Trinity, not only with a degree of a sceptical embarrassment, but with a levity inconsistent with the character of a sound believer. Towards what he called the Scripture Trinity, he carried the exterior professions of respect, but took unreserved liberties with the Trinity in Unity."

The opinion entertained by many in London of Mr. Robinson's falling off in his Trinitarian sentiments, may be judged of by the following letter written about that time by the treasurer of the Baptist fund, James Smith, Esq. "I believe," says Mr. Smith, "practical religion always has, and always will, increase or decrease, in proportion as the doctrine of what is called the Trinity, and others necessarily connected with it, are embraced or rejected: and as I view it in this light, I have thought it right in some few instances to express my concern that one whom I have so sincerely respected, should be inclined to pour contempt on any doctrine that to me seems to enter into the essentials of Christianity."

Was it then at all wonderful that when the friends and admirers of Mr. Robinson belonging to the Baptist fund, began to exclaim against *the creed*, as they called it, that the genuine orthodox Trinitarians attempted to guard against such a dangerous innovation? His biographer says, sarcastically speaking of the managers of the fund, "They insisted that Robinson, under a pretence of introducing liberality into the churches, studied to spread the contagion of heresy, to weaken the frame, and to destroy the bloom of Calvinism; that out of the midst of his philanthropy he wished, as it were, to compose a draught, which

after insensibly infecting the pastors, would operate as a slow poison on their flocks. Many ministers, therefore, who began to relish his doctrine, were obliged to forego their accustomed claims!" No, not their *claims*!—having so far become Anti-trinitarians that they could not declare themselves Calvinists, the managers had no longer the power to grant them assistance.

The *creed* referred to had been adopted at the motion of the Rev. Benjamin Wallin, December 1, 1772, and was thus expressed:—"That the ministers and churches, who receive out of the fund, on their next application, give a particular and explicit account of their faith, especially relating to the divinity of our Lord and the Doctrine of the Trinity." How Mr. Robinson viewed this regulation and the chagrin he felt on account of it, may be judged of by the following letter written March 4, 1789, to his friend Mary Hayes. "There is in our congregation (for we receive all) a very worthy but very poor old minister, who chose his last days should be spent with a people he esteems. The old man was advised to petition the Baptist board for a share of that charity which they annually assign to superannuated ministers. Instead of sending him charity they sent him faith, [that is, articles of faith to subscribe,] and informed him they had made a law not to relieve any except they subscribed a creed, a *human* creed which they sent him; and the first article of which is 'There are three divine persons in the unity of the Godhead!' Absolute nonsense, [awful impiety!] supported by tyranny over men's consciences. The old man believes as they do, and he sent up a faith as sound as old Calvin's itself; but he could not help boggling at the idea of a London lord over a country brother's conscience. In this church we all hold inviolably the perfection of Scripture without human additions; and for the rest the old man believes what he approves, though nobody hardly believes with him, for we are only brethren, and nobody plays Jupiter here."

Mr. Robinson's biographer writes with more candour than his master: he says, "Many of the Welch Baptist ministers and churches never signed the creed, and of course received not the bounty of the fund: others reckoned it but just in the Baptist

1789.]

Baptist Fund.

board to demand a test of orthodoxy, and but reasonable that a Calvinist minister, before he received the alms of this fund, should subscribe a Calvinistic confession. As to Robinson, he thought the whole a system of oppression, and used to lament to his university friends as follows:—‘Many of our Dissenters admire your clerical petitioners who opposed subscription in the church, as well as Tyrwhitt, Jebb, Edwards, and Friend, who opposed it in the university, and yet impose it on their own students, and their own ministers.’”

It is very affecting to find that Mr. Robinson should have manifested so much opposition to the doctrines of grace, and to have become so zealous in giving his support to the Sabellian, or Arian, or Socinian heresies. It appears that when he was appointed minister of the church at Cambridge, in 1761, he declared in his confession of faith, “That in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons or substances, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in majesty and glory.” After reading this sound Calvinistic confession he observed, “*these* appeared to him to be scriptural truths: that when any of them surpassed his comprehension, his reason did homage to revelation: but in this there was nothing done, but what a naturalist did every time he studied a daisy.”* That he should have lived long enough to call this doctrine “absolute nonsense,” is a proof what awful errors a man may be permitted to embrace who is suffered to lean to his own understanding.

The charge made by Mr. Robinson against the managers of the fund, of tyrannizing over men’s consciences, is supported by no evidence: the fund being raised for particular Baptists, and a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in that of the proper divinity of the Son of God, being essential to constitute that character, those who were Anti-trinitarians had no claim whatever to such a designation, and consequently had no right to the assistance which had been provided exclusively for such persons.

We must now return to the year 1786, for the purpose of

* Dyer’s Life of Robinson, p. 45

noticing an event which again brought forward the general body of Dissenting Ministers, to present an address to his Majesty.

When the King was on his way to the House of Peers, an attempt was made upon the life of his Majesty, by a female named *Margaret Nicholson*. She was brought before the council August 8, 1786, and after a close examination was pronounced to be an insane person, and was accordingly ordered to be confined in a madhouse as such.

Their congratulatory address was presented by a Baptist minister, and is now first printed from the *London Gazette*.

*" St. James's, September, 13, 1786.—*This day the following Address of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, was presented to the King by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stennett, attended by seventeen other ministers of that body, being introduced by the Marquis of Carmarthen one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state.

" TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

" The humble Address of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster.

" Most gracious Sovereign,

" We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to approach your royal person with our warmest congratulations on the late signal interposition of the divine Providence in favour of your Majesty's invaluable life: an event which has afforded joy to all your Majesty's faithful subjects, and to none more than the Protestant Dissenters, who look up with affectionate reverence to the distinguished virtues of their sovereign, and feel themselves happy in the enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties, which have received so memorable a confirmation and enlargement since your Majesty's accession to the throne of these kingdoms.

" To that great Being who so mercifully shielded your Majesty's person in the moment of danger we have offered our most

1786.]

His Majesty's Reply.

grateful acknowledgments, that the like sense of the Divine interference which your Majesty devoutly feels might be deeply impressed upon the hearts of all your subjects.

“ Permit us, Sire, to add that our joy on this occasion is greatly heightened by reflecting that the horrid stroke your Majesty so happily escaped was guided not by the hand of premeditated malice, but of compassionate insanity. The repose which this consideration justly creates in your Majesty's breast, and that of your royal consort, cannot fail of affording the highest satisfaction to your people, whose happiness is deeply connected with that of their sovereign.

“ With great pleasure we embrace this opportunity of assuring your Majesty of our affectionate and inviolable attachment to your person and government, nor will we cease, Sire, to offer our most ardent prayer to Almighty God, that your life may be protracted under the smiles of Providence to the most distant period; and that the crown your Majesty received from your illustrious ancestors may descend adorned with all their and your princely virtues to the latest posterity.

“ To which Address his Majesty was pleased to return the following most gracious answer :—

“ I thank you for this dutiful and loyal address, and for your affectionate congratulations on my providential escape from the attempt which was made upon my person. I have a firm dependance upon your steady attachment to my person and government: and you may be assured of the continuance of my protection in the enjoyment of your civil and religious liberties.

“ They were all received very graciously, and had the honour to kiss his Majesty's hand.”

For nearly half a century no steps had been taken by the Dissenters to obtain a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. A special meeting of the committee of the deputies, for this purpose, was held the 22th of December, 1786, to consider the expediency of applying to parliament for the repeal of the

Corporation and Test Acts, "*so far as they affect Protestant Dissenters.*" It will be seen that this last clause was intended to separate between the cases of Protestant Dissenters and Roman Catholics, because in regard to the test laws they are totally dissimilar from each other. In January, 1787, a deputation waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt, and upon several other leading members of both houses, soliciting their attention to the subject, and stating the claims of the Protestant Dissenters, upon the justice and liberality of the legislature. In a letter to Mr. Pitt they thus expressed themselves: "None of his Majesty's subjects are more loyal, nor more faithfully attached to the constitution of their country. They cannot, therefore, but feel it to be a grievance that they should remain stigmatized by these two acts, from which no single benefit results, as they conceive, either to the church or state."

On the 28th of March, 1787, the measure was brought forward, in the House of Commons, by Henry Beaufoy, Esq. and seconded by Sir Henry Houghton. It was, it is said, also most ably supported by Charles James Fox, Esq. Lord Beauchamp, and William Smith, Esq. Mr. Pitt and Lord North, the ministers, opposed it, and after a debate of seven hours it was lost by one hundred and seventy-eight to one hundred. In the next report of the committee they remark on this circumstance:—"Conscious that the Protestant Dissenters have ever been ardent friends to the legal constitution and government of this country; zealous adherents to the House of Hanover, and faithful subjects to his present Majesty; conscious at the same time, that they solicit nothing but what is just and reasonable to be asked, and what it would be safe and honourable for the legislature to grant, the committee unanimously and zealously recommend that this great object be pursued with a prudent but steady assiduity, with a decent but manly firmness and fortitude, till the redress sought shall be obtained."

The next step adopted by the committee, was to circulate throughout the kingdom a letter addressed to the Protestant Dissenters, requesting their zealous and avowed co-operation with their brethren in London, it having been stated by their opponents that "the Dissenters at large were neither earnest in

1790.]

Corporation and Test Acts.

their exertions, nor unanimous in their wishes for redress." Books and pamphlets were also circulated in favour of the repeal. Meetings were called in the different counties, and resolutions passed expressing a warm concurrence in the proceedings of the committee, and highly approving of a renewed application to parliament. In some instances, too, the Dissenters in the country were anxious that the application should extend not only to the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, but to the general abolition of all penal laws on the subject of religion.

On the 8th of May, 1789, Mr. Beaufoy moved in the House of Commons: "That this House will immediately resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of so much of the act of the 13th of Charles II. for the well governing and regulating of corporations, and of the act of the 25th of Charles II. for the preventing of dangers which may happen from popish recusants, as requires persons before they are admitted into any office or place in corporations, or having any office civil or military, or any place of trust under the crown, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the rites of the Church of England." The House divided upon this motion, when it appeared that two hundred and twenty-eight had voted upon it, and that it was lost by a majority only of twenty.

The committee were now almost confident that in the next session of parliament they should prove successful; they employed, therefore, all the means in their power to strengthen their influence in parliament by requesting those Dissenters who had votes for members of parliament, to solicit their respective representatives to attend in the house when the subject should be again brought forward, and give it their support.

Early in 1790 Mr. Fox was solicited to submit the motion to the house at such time as he should judge most convenient; but though that statesman was quite willing to undertake it, he gave no hope of success. The Revolution which had lately taken place in France, filled persons otherwise liberally minded, with fear respecting any proposed change in favour of liberty. The cry was again raised, loud and horrifying, that the church was in danger! It is said, "in many cases, it was scarcely safe to be

known as a Protestant Dissenter ; and nothing but the power appeared wanting to renew all the horrors of persecution."

On the 15th of February, 1790, Mr. Fox gave notice for a motion for leave to bring in a bill for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Mr. Pitt instantly moved for a call of the house on the day previous to that which was fixed upon by Mr. Fox. This debate accordingly took place on the 1st of March, when it was found on a division that one hundred and five had voted for the bill and two hundred and ninety-four against it.*

It was now resolved by the Dissenters, that a standing committee should be formed of delegates from all parts of the kingdom to meet in London. The first general meeting of this committee was held on the 24th of January, 1792, and took the title of "the Deputies and Delegates from the Protestant Dissenters of England and Wales appointed to obtain a repeal of the Test Laws." They soon after circulated an able and spirited paper entitled, "An Address to the People of England." This measure increased the spirit of opposition to them throughout the country ; and it was thought to be a sufficient reply to all their arguments and appeals as to the justice of the cause, &c. to reiterate the cry, "The church is in danger!"

The most flagrant attack made upon the Dissenters was by an association formed at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in November 1792, by a Mr. John Reeves and others. The avowed object of this association was, they said, "The protection of liberty and property against the attempts of republicans and levellers." In one of the papers which they circulated they charged the Dissenters with having been the authors of the American war, and of the consequent taxes. "Our national debt," they say, "for which we are now paying such heavy taxes, was doubled by the troubles of America, all brought upon us from the beginning, by the Dissenters, there and here. Did not Dr. Price," say they, "write for them? and did not the Birmingham doctor (Dr. Priestley) encourage them and write

* Between these periods, viz. February 21, 1790, the Rev. Samuel Pearce of Birmingham preached and published a sermon, entitled "*The Oppressive, unjust, and profane nature and tendency of the Corporation and Test Acts exposed.*"

1792.]

Loyalty of Dissenters.

mob-principles of government to justify them? Yet these people who brought our troubles upon us, are they that rail most at the expensiveness of our government, and use it as a handle for overturning it," &c.

One would have thought that these caluminous accusations would have been generally considered so flagrantly false, that no persons would have attached any degree of credit to them. The deputies however at a special general meeting December 13, 1792, "for the purpose," they say, "to declare their adherence to the constitution of the country as by law established," adopted the following declaration, which was circulated through the medium of the newspapers:—

"We feel ourselves," say they, "called upon, at the present period, publicly to declare our firm attachment to the constitution of Great Britain; being persuaded that it is excellent in its principles, and wisely formed for the extension of solid happiness and real liberty.

"It always has been, and still continues to be our determined resolution, to contribute our best endeavours to maintain and preserve, by all the means in our power, the constitution of this kingdom, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons; at the same time we rejoice as Britons, that one great merit of this invaluable institution is, that it contains within itself the means both of reform and improvement.

"Having thus in the most unequivocal manner declared our sentiments at this critical juncture, it is a pleasing reflection that this declaration is in perfect consistency with the conduct of Protestant Dissenters ever since the glorious revolution of 1688, which we consider as the basis of the constitution, and which happily conduced to the establishment of the present royal family on the throne.

(Signed) Edward Jefferies, Chairman."

The effect which this declaration produced on the nation at large must have proved favourable as to the loyalty of Dissenters, and this it is probable would never have been impugned but for the spirit of the times, as every expression of pleasure in the

Meeting-house burnt.

[1792.]

triumph of liberal principles in France, had subjected persons who made them to the charge of republicanism! It was perfectly natural that Dissenters should rejoice in the prevalence of sentiments, which they hoped would prove the overthrow of popery and despotism on the continent as they had done in England. They certainly thought that the "Tree of Liberty," as it was called, would produce generous fruit for the emancipation of France; nor could they have anticipated the results which followed would have been the re-establishment of despotism and the aggrandizement of popery! The association before referred to, however, in a new edition of their before mentioned paper, left out the paragraph which had proved so offensive to the Dissenting deputies.

As a proof of the hatred which existed at this time in some parts of the country, the meeting-house at Guilsborough in Northamptonshire was burnt down on the night of Christmas-day, 1792, and several circumstances led to the belief that it was the result of design. His Majesty's ministers having had a statement of facts laid before them by the deputies, offered a reward for the apprehension of the incendiaries; and this no doubt was the occasion of checking the spirit of outrage against the Dissenters in other parts of the kingdom.

The long and arduous struggle which took place at this period for an equality of rights in the state, is a most profitable lesson to the Protestant Dissenters. It goes to prove, if not to demonstrate, that while there is an *endowed sect*, and while the government considers it necessary to give it support, it will necessarily monopolize all the honours and profits resulting from its connection with the state. The instance recorded respecting the outrage at Guilsborough, (and many others might be given,) shews that the Dissenters may confidently calculate upon being *protected*, but must not expect to be *encouraged* by the government. Nothing is more easy than to prove, that the Test Laws are unjust and impolitic, and that it is proper for Dissenters to embrace every suitable opportunity firmly and respectfully to protest against the unjust opprobrium which is cast upon their characters, there being nothing in their principles subversive to the safety of the government, especially ought they to

1790.]

Baptist Register.

express their abhorrence of the profanation of the Lord's supper. But while things exist as they are in respect to the established church, the most that the Dissenters can expect is to be relieved from penalties and to be preserved from persecutions: and both these are granted them by the annual indemnity bill. It may be necessary to add, the annual passing of this bill is certainly an implied obloquy upon the Dissenters; yet as it takes away the necessity of their violating their consciences even when elected to offices in corporations, or when they accept of office under the King, it is certainly a great relief to pious persons. Their having the privilege, too, of seats in parliament with which the test laws have nothing to do, is a virtual declaration that they are considered by the regulations of the constitution as good citizens. The writer is fully of opinion that the Dissenters, for the recognized right of private judgment and for a protection from persecution, must continue to pay the price of being excluded from holding public offices. And should this unjust and exclusive system be still suffered to exist, they must imitate Paul who said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am—to be content."

Up to this period the Baptists had no periodical publication devoted exclusively to their use, but in the year 1790, the Rev. Dr. John Rippon of London commenced a work, which he entitled, "The Baptist Annual Register;" including sketches of the state of religion among different denominations of good men at home and abroad. The following dedication prefixed to the first volume, will give an idea of the author's plan:—"This infant publication, under the fostering hand of its benevolent patrons, is most affectionately dedicated to all the baptized ministers and people in America, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the United Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, Prussia, and elsewhere; especially to those whose names adorn the following sheets; with a desire of promoting an universal interchange of kind offices among them, and in serious expectation that before many years elapse, (in imitation of other wise men,) a deputation from all these climes will meet, probably

in London, to consult the ecclesiastical good of the whole, which is now first of all submitted to their superior wisdom by the unworthiest of all their brethren—the Author.”

It is stated by Dr. Rippon in the preface, (written at the end of three years from the commencement of the work,) “As the work is called the Baptist Register, it may be necessary to observe, that it is by no means a production or publication of the people at large denominated Baptists. Great numbers of them indeed have repeatedly expressed a strong desire to see *something* of this kind; and thousands have given the best encouragement to fill up *these* outlines. But I have ventured so to characterize it, as the publication *principally* relates to this people, and because *no other* title appeared *suitable* to it. The production, however, boasts of no patronage so high as that of the whole body of Baptists; but it would be improper not to say, *it aspires towards* that honour, nor *wishes a greater*.”

It appears from a list of our churches in 1790, that they amounted in England to three hundred and twenty-six, and in Wales to fifty-six. It must be recollected however as to the latter, that many of these churches had four or five branches each, with as many meeting-houses and as many pastors for supplying them.

The publication of the numbers of the “Annual Register,” though at distant and uncertain intervals, was doubtless very useful in diffusing valuable foreign information, and keeping up a medium of intercourse between the churches and ministers at home. The author, who is still living, is entitled to the grateful acknowledgments of the denomination for his labours, and for the spirit of enterprize manifested in collecting his materials, and in his extensive correspondence with foreign Baptists, especially in America. He certainly deserves much greater respect from his denomination than he has ever yet received. His excellent Selection of Hymns, first published in the year 1790, and which was designed as a supplement to the Psalms and Hymns of Dr. Watts, has been very generally used, and with great approbation, by our churches. This selection has passed through many large editions of various sizes.

1791.]

Slave Trade.

It is pleasing to find that the Western Association of Baptist churches united cordially with those honourable philanthropists in London, who were engaged in attempting means for procuring the abolition of the abominable slave trade. They voted, between 1787 and 1790, three benefactions of five guineas each, for this purpose. The following letter from the chairman, Granville Sharp, Esq. will shew how this co-operation was estimated. It is addressed to the Rev. Joseph Horsey of Portsea, as moderator of the association held at Horseley, Gloucestershire.

Leadenhall Street, London, July 11, 1789.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ Having communicated the resolution of the Baptist Association at Horseley, dated the 3rd and 4th. to the committee of the Society for effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, I received their directions to request that you will be pleased to acquaint that association, that their approbation of the endeavours of this committee, and their so hearty concurrence with us in the purposes of our institution, affords very great satisfaction to the committee, and encouragement to their steady perseverance: and they also desire me to acknowledge the receipt of the second subscription from the association of five guineas, which has been received by the treasurer of this committee.

I am, with great respect,

Your most obedient, humble Servant,
Granville Sharp, Chairman.

The midland association of Baptist churches met at Oakham, on June 14—16th, 1791. They unanimously voted, that five guineas should be sent up to the treasurer of the abolition society for procuring the abolition of the slave-trade, “ that we might shew our hearty abhorrence of that wicked and detestable merchandize. The reception of this sum,” they say, “ has since been acknowledged in the most obliging manner, by Granville Sharp, Esq. chairman of the committee, who assures us that the committee are now more animated if possible than ever, against the iniquitous and disgraceful practices of slave dealers and slave holders, and are firmly determined as by an indispensable duty to God and man, to persevere in their endea-

vours by all legal means to effect the abolition of such enormities."

A sermon was published about this time by the Rev. James Dore, of London, on "The African Slave-trade," which soon reached the third edition. In January, the next year, the Rev. Abraham Booth of London, published another, entitled, "Commerce in the Human Species, and the enslaving of innocent Persons inimical to the Laws of Moses and Christ."

It is pleasing to find that the Baptists were found, if not in the foremost rank of this noble army, (this was occupied by the friends or quakers,) yet in the immediate rear, upon this truly patriotic occasion: nor were their exertions, wishes, and prayers, in vain. The legislature at length listened to the petitions of the nation, and during the short period of the administration over which the Right Honourable Charles James Fox presided, the accursed practice of trafficking in human flesh was abolished. Slavery however still exists in our West Indian Colonies, and eight hundred thousands of our fellow men and fellow subjects wear its galling, oppressive, and degrading chain: to those who are compelled to wear these fetters it is most degrading, but much more debasing to the high spirited nation that permits and sanctions it.

The change which had taken place in the minds of the Rev. Andrew Fuller and Dr. John Ryland, respecting the manner of preaching the gospel to the unconverted, and the change of feeling produced in consequence on the minds of those who presided as pastors over the churches in Northamptonshire, gradually led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society:—an event which has produced most blessed results in regard to the extension of the gospel both at home and abroad.

At the association held at Clipstone in 1791, Mr. (now Dr.) Carey, then pastor of the church at Leicester, proposed this question: "Whether it were not practicable, and our bounden duty to attempt somewhat toward spreading the gospel in the heathen world?" Mr. Carey was desired to draw up his thoughts on the subject and publish them; this he did soon afterwards in a pamphlet entitled, "An Enquiry into the obligations of Christians

1792.]

Baptist Missionary Society.

to use means for the Conversion of the Heathen:" the profits of this pamphlet the author devoted to Missionary objects, should a society be formed for that purpose.

The Baptist Missionary Society was formed at Kettering, October 2, 1792.* The following are the resolutions which were adopted as its basis:—

"1. Desirous of making an effort for the propagation of the gospel among the Heathen, agreeably to what is recommended in brother Carey's late publication on the subject, we whose names appear in the subsequent subscription, do solemnly agree to act in society together for that purpose.

"2. As in the present divided state of christendom, it seems that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a mission, it is agreed that this society be called, "*The Particular Baptist Society for propagating the gospel among the Heathen.*"

"3. As such an undertaking must needs be attended with expense, we agree immediately to open a subscription for the above purpose, and to recommend it to others.

"4. Every person who shall subscribe ten pounds at once, or ten shillings and sixpence annually, shall be considered to be a member of the society.

"5. That the Rev. Messrs. John Ryland, Reynold Hogg, William Carey, John Sutcliff, and Andrew Fuller, be appointed a committee, three of whom shall be empowered to act, in carrying into effect the purposes of the society.

"6. That the Rev. Reynold Hogg be appointed treasurer, and the Rev. Andrew Fuller secretary.

"7. That the subscriptions be paid in at the Northampton ministers' meeting, October 31, 1792, at which time the subject shall be considered more particularly by the Committee, and other subscribers who are present."

"Signed, John Ryland, Reynold Hogg, John Sutcliff, A. Fuller,

* In a back parlour of Mrs. Beeby Wallis, a widow, and an honourable member of the church under the care of Mr. Fuller.

Abraham Greenwood, Edward Sharman, Joshua Burton, Samuel Pearce, Thomas Blundell, William Heighton, John Eayres, Joseph Simons, whose subscriptions in all amounted to £13. 2s. 6d."

At their next meeting Mr. Fuller and Mr. Carey were unable, on account of ill health, to attend. Mr. Fuller, however, sent "a written copy of the former resolutions, with an account of two new subscribers of a guinea, one of whom engages to continue it annually." Mr. Carey sent word, that "a gentleman from Northumberland had promised to send him £20 for the Society, and had further engaged to subscribe four guineas annually!"

Mr. Pearce, being present, told the meeting, that "on his return to Birmingham from the former meeting he informed his friends concerning the society, and preached upon the subject; he had collected £70; and also that his congregation in Cannon Street had formed a district Society in aid of the mission, 'for the purpose of receiving both occasional contributions, and annual, quarterly, or weekly subscriptions, and to co-operate, by every other means in their power, with the primary society, in pursuing the grand object we have conjointly in view.' At this meeting two other friends subscribed, and paid two guineas a-piece, two more one guinea each, and another half a guinea, making six guineas and a half. And such members as were present of the first subscribers paid their subscriptions into the hands of the Treasurer; who proposed to 'put the sums now received into the hands of a banker who will pay interest for the same.' " The fund now amounted to about £90.

At the close of this year was published by the committee a short address, earnestly recommending the benevolent design. "The object of this Society is to evangelize the poor, dark, idolatrous heathens, by sending Missionaries into different parts of the world, where the glorious gospel of Christ is not at present published, to preach the glad tidings of salvation, by the blood of the Lamb." It is a very affecting fact, that according to the lowest computation there are at this moment about *four hundred millions* of our fellow men in a state of pagan darkness," &c.

Connected with this address was an account of the rise and

1796.]

Village and Itinerant Preaching.

progress of the society, which is already given. A "N. B." shews how they felt the want of information on the subject of conducting missions.

"The following articles we wish to be examined and discussed in the most impartial manner:—What qualifications are especially requisite in missionaries? What persons are known or supposed to be both suitable and willing to be employed in this business? What advice should be given to the missionaries, or what regulations adopted concerning them? Also in what parts of the heathen world do there seem to be the most promising openings? What information on this head may be obtained from any late books of travels, or from Christian merchants, or from such persons as would at least favour the design of converting the heathen?"

The society now heard, for the first time, of Mr. John Thomas, a member of the Baptist Church in Little Wild Street, London, who had been for several years in the East Indies, and who had, by preaching among the natives, brought some of them to listen to the gospel of Christ. It was this event that led them to turn their first attention toward Calcutta. On the 10th of January, 1793, at a meeting of the society in Kettering, Mr. Carey consented to become the colleague of Mr. Thomas, and on the 13th of June, 1793, the missionaries sailed in the *Princess Maria*, a Danish East Indiaman, Captain Christmas: they had attempted, but were not permitted, to proceed to British India in a ship of the East India Company.

The publications of the Society, and the eloquent and evangelical preaching of the Rev. Messrs. Pearce and Fuller in different parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of procuring collections as its support, enkindled a spirit of zeal which had not been before manifested, or felt on behalf of heathens at home. This work of visiting the dark villages originated among the Baptists with Mr. now Dr. Steadman, who then resided at Broughton, in Hampshire. His neighbour, the late Mr. Saffery, of Salisbury, soon entered cordially into his views, and in the summer of June, 1796, these two ministers undertook and performed an itinerating tour throughout Cornwall: the expenses of this journey were paid out of the funds of the Baptist Missionary Society.

A district Society, for promoting Itinerant and Village preaching, was formed September 20, in this year, at Braintree, in Essex. Their object was to employ an itinerant minister to visit those towns and villages in that county where the gospel was not preached, and to support him from the association fund.

The next year, 1797, a Society was formed among the churches in London, with the following designation:—"The Baptist Society in London, for the encouragement and support of Itinerant and Village preaching." The objects to be accomplished are thus described:—Rule 11th. "The committee shall provide and send out, as soon as may be, after due examination, such Calvinistic ministers of the Baptist persuasion as appear to them properly qualified for itinerant preaching; which ministers shall be entirely under the direction of the committee, and together with such assistance as the committee may judge necessary for the encouragement of village preaching by settled ministers, shall be paid out of the funds of this society." 13th. "The committee, as they may think it expedient, shall be allowed to furnish their itinerant ministers with a few small religious tracts to give away."

The address which this society circulated, was written by the venerable Abraham Booth, and demands a place in our history:—

"It is very affecting to think that in this country, though highly favoured with civil and religious privileges, the inhabitants of many villages are destitute of an evangelical ministry: because it is apparent, from holy Scripture, that the gospel of salvation by grace is of the highest importance, to enlighten the minds and relieve the consciences, to sanctify the hearts and reform the lives, of the ungodly and profligate.

"This gospel, though contained in the Bible, and though that best of books lie open to every one who can read his own language, must, according to the appointment of Heaven, be exhibited in a public ministry. Preaching the gospel, or publishing salvation by Jesus Christ, is the ordinance of God; and the grand mean of converting sinners, in order to their present peace, their greater usefulness, and their final happiness. *Preach the gospel to every creature*, was the high command of our sovereign Lord to his disciples, just before he ascended the throne o

1797.]

Address of the London Society.

universal dominion. This divine order is yet in force ; and its obligation extends to all that are invested with the ministerial character. Nor ought private Christians to consider themselves as unconcerned in the execution of an order so authoritative and so beneficent. For, without their co-operation, by affording pecuniary assistance, the ministers of Christ are not able to make those exertions which, in the common course of providence, are necessary to the diffusion of spiritual knowledge, by itinerant preaching, in the darker parts of any country. Thus private brethren become *fellow-helpers to the truth*, and to the public ministers of it.

“ It is with peculiar pleasure that we contemplate the recent formation of Societies in the country, not only among the Particular Baptists, but also among our Congregational Brethren, for the spread of the gospel in this land by village preaching. A design so important, and a conduct so laudable, that we cannot but earnestly recommend them, as worthy to be adopted by all those pastors and churches, in the different counties, who *love* the doctrines of divine grace ; and, especially, to those of our own denomination.

“ As private brethren, though not endued with abilities for the public ministry, may nevertheless possess a well-informed understanding, a gift for prayer, a talent for edifying conversation, and be conspicuous in the churches to which they belong, for steady piety, for benevolence, and for a well-regulated zeal ; so it is very desirable that such characters were selected and encouraged, by those churches of which they are members, to use their pious endeavours in adjacent villages. By benevolent, prudent, and gradual efforts, one or another, in each circumjacent village, might admit a few neighbours into his house to hear a person of the preceding description read the scriptures, converse on sacred subjects, and pray ; whether on Lord’s-days, or at other times, as opportunity presented. By such means the cause of Christ might be greatly promoted ; for experience and observation unite in attesting, that a similar line of conduct has been owned of God, to the spiritual benefit of many.

“ Though real Christians ought always to consider themselves as lying under indispensable obligations, to use every scriptural

mean in their power, to diffuse *the savour of the knowledge of Christ* in the several countries where they reside ; yet, the varying aspect of Divine Providence may more loudly call for exertions of this kind at one time than at another. Such is the present season. For who, that seriously reflects on those scenes of distress which are in the world, but must exclaim, *Behold the works of the Lord ! What desolations he hath made in the earth !* God, in the language of prophecy, is manifestly *come out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities, and to shake the earth with terror.* The great and alarming events which have recently taken place, are pregnant with new and powerful *motives* to strenuous endeavours for the spread of divine truth ; by a conscientious and practical regard to which it shall be apparent, that our hearts are in unison with that comprehensive petition, **THY KINGDOM COME.**

“ While we rejoice in the spiritual and laudable exertions of our Christian Brethren, under different denominations, to propagate the gospel among the Heathen in foreign climes, we should not forget the many myriads at home, who have scarcely any thing pertaining to Christianity, besides the name—who are profoundly ignorant, if not notoriously profligate and profane.

“ The spread of infidelity is now uncommonly great. Multitudes of people in this country, being unacquainted with the true principles of Christianity, have no experience of their salutary tendency to relieve the distressed conscience, to sanctify the depraved heart, or to meliorate the conduct ; and, consequently, there is no reason to wonder, that many of this description fall an easy prey to the artful insinuations, and the blasphemous assertions, which so frequently proceed from the lips, or the pens, of Deists. Many, indeed, are the judicious defences of Christianity which have appeared in our language. These, however, being seldom read by the lower classes of people, can have but little effect in preserving them from the contagion of Infidelity. Besides, *reading* the inspired volume, and the *preaching* of divine truth, are the grand means, appointed of God, to excite serious reflection and earnest prayer ; to produce conviction of sin and interest the conscience in what the Scriptures reveal ; to renew the heart, and give a holy bias to the whole soul. Now, per-

1797.]

Address of the London Society.

sons who are thus affected by what the Divine Writings contain, will revere the Bible, and be far from renouncing Christianity.

“ Amidst all the improvements in philosophy, in science, and in useful arts, there is the highest reason to lament the neglect of that inspired volume, which is *able to make us wise to salvation*. A serious attention to the sacred contents of which must lead us to conclude, either, that the New Testament does not give a just representation of *Christianity*; or, that incomparably the major part of those who profess the religion of Jesus are not *Christians*: for Christianity, as delineated in the apostolic writings, is the religion of rectitude, of love, and of peace. Evangelical truth, which is the great instrument, in the hand of God, for promoting real Christianity, is the doctrine of divine benevolence to man—the doctrine of pardon, of reconciliation, and of salvation, by Jesus Christ. This doctrine, by whomsoever sincerely believed, never fails to produce a cordial veneration for God, and an unfeigned benevolence to man. *That* veneration is expressed, by a conscientious regard to holy worship, according to scriptural rule; by habitually observing the divine precepts, and by devout submission to the orders of Providence. This benevolence is manifested by a series of truly virtuous affections towards our own species, in order to promote individual and social happiness; or, in other words, a prevailing disposition to treat others, as we might reasonably wish them to treat us. To profess the religion of Jesus, while habitually destitute of that veneration, and of this benevolence, is to insult Christianity, and to libel the New Testament.

“ Let us, then, Christian brethren, regard these considerations as emphatically inculcating the uncertainty of all temporal enjoyments, the necessity of spiritual mindedness, and a practical attention to that divine precept, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*. Nor is much reflection required to convince us, that there is no object of equal importance with that of promoting the genuine cause of Christ. To this, therefore, let pious and prudent exertions be directed. Let suitable persons for an itinerant ministry be, therefore, engaged: and let stated pastors in the country, according to their abilities and opportunities, employ themselves in village preaching. Let reading

a portion of the sacred scripture constitute a part of their public devotions ; that those who cannot read, who have not Bibles, or who suffer them to lie neglected, may hear the Lord himself speaking in the Old and New Testament.

“ In these labours let them keep the great object constantly in view : which is, not merely to propagate a set of theological sentiments, though ever so true ; much less to disseminate political opinions, or to canvass the affairs of state ; but, in the fear of God, with much prayer, circumspection, and self-denial, to warn sinners of *the wrath to come*—to *preach the unsearchable riches of Christ*—and to render their ungodly fellow-creatures truly wise, holy, and happy. Then, being Christians indeed—by exemplary piety in the several churches with which they may be connected—by domestic religion and good order in the families to which they belong—by integrity and benevolence in all their private connexions—and by a peaceable behaviour, as members of civil society at large—they shall *adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour*.

“ Such, brethren, is the object we have in view ; and such are the effects to be expected from a successful pursuit of it. But as, in this case, no success can possibly attend the most arduous exertions, without the concurrence of Divine Providence, and the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, it is our indispensable duty, daily to solicit the blessing of God upon all our feeble endeavours to promote the interests of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

The Treasurer to this important society was Mr. W. Fox, of Colebrook Row, Islington, a deacon of the church in Prescott Street. This gentleman, who has not long been deceased, had the honour of forming the *Sunday School Society*,* the first institution of the kind which had been established on such general principles, as to unite persons of all sects, Episcopalians and Dissenters.

* The honour of instituting *Sunday Schools* is due to Robert Raikes, Esq. of Gloucester. Mr. Fox, who corresponded with that gentleman on the subject, suggested and formed the *Sunday School Society*, which has been of such signal use in the kingdom.

1794.]

Dissenter's Magazine.

We return to the year 1794, which commenced with a monthly periodical work, entitled "The Protestant Dissenter's Magazine, designed to promote the cause of Knowledge and Truth, of Righteousness and Peace." It was conducted by Pædobaptists, but was intended to be a repository for the use of the whole body of Dissenters; several Baptists wrote for it, and the utmost candour appears to have been manifested towards our denomination.

The work was discontinued when six volumes had been completed.

An event in this year led to an unpleasant controversy with the Independent brethren, on the often disputed topic of the proper subjects and mode of Baptism.

The Rev. Peter Edwards, pastor of a Baptist church at Portsea, who had been previously a Pædobaptist, saw reason again to change his sentiments, and to defend them by publishing a work, which he entitled "Candid Reasons for renouncing the Principles of Antipædobaptism."

Several anonymous pieces were published in reply to this uncandid and abusive writer. The chief of which was one entitled "The Principles of Antipædobaptism, and the Principles of female Communion, completely consistent, in reply to the Rev. Peter Edwards; with animadversions on his temper and conduct in that publication." In the motto is a very descriptive quotation from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xvi. p. 137 :—"To prove the sincerity of his conversion, he treated his enemies with scurrilous nick-names, banter, and abuse; a species of reasoning which seldom succeeds in recommending a bad cause, and never confers any credit on one that is good." The preface and notes of this pamphlet were written by the late Rev. James Dore, of London; but the pamphlet itself, it has appeared since Mr. Booth's death, was written by that minister; who would not appear as the antagonist of such a writer as Mr. Peter Edwards. It was no wonder that worthy man should have preferred encountering such an opponent in a mask, as it would have disgraced him to have avowed himself the antagonist of so versatile and scurrilous an opponent.

The late Rev. Dr. Joseph Jenkins, of London, published a work of considerable size on this occasion, entitled "A Defence of the

Controversy with the Rev. Peter Edwards.

[1798.]

Baptists against the Aspersions and Misrepresentations of Mr. Peter Edwards," &c. A very conclusive answer was published by the Rev. Joseph Kinghorn of Norwich, entitled "A Defence of Infant Baptism, its best Confutation, &c.; being a reply to Mr. Peter Edwards, on his own ground."

In July, 1797, Mr. now Dr. Steadman, made another itinerant tour, accompanied by Mr. Franklin, then a student of Bristol, now of Coventry. The conclusion of Mr. Steadman's letter to Dr. Rippon, giving an account of their labours, refers to other labours of a similar description:—"I was glad to hear of the numbers that attended on the preaching of yourself and colleagues in Devon and Somerset; and most sincerely wish a divine blessing may attend your labours. Nor was it without surprise I heard of the numbers that attended brother Webster, and my cousin Palmer, in some places in Herefordshire, places in which the worst of behaviour might have been expected. Oh that it may prove an indication that God is about to carry on a great work in that very ignorant and profane part of the kingdom."

In the year 1798 I find our churches were increased in England to three hundred and twenty-six, and in Wales to eighty-four, consisting in the whole of about nine thousand members.

Some remarks of the editor of the Baptist Register at this period shew the good effects which had resulted from the system of itinerant and village preaching, as also the state of our churches.

"It deserves to be remarked, with gratitude, how generally the churches are supplied with ministers, pastors, and the means of grace; prayer meetings are in numerous places well attended, yea, better than ever, and eminently so *among the churches which are flourishing*. There are a *few* of our societies, and but a few, blessed be God, in all the list, whose members are decreased. Some also have great reason to mourn, whether they do or not, over their barrenness and lukewarmness. But revivals have been enjoyed in other places, and the members in several churches have been more than tripled within five years. In one church an hundred members have been added in two years. The greatest increase of which we have lately heard, has been

1798.]

State of the Churches.

at Ipswich; sixty members were added last year, and two brethren sent into the work of the ministry, One little country association of five churches, June 1797, consisted of seven hundred and thirty-nine members.—All the five have been under a necessity of enlarging their places of worship. And it is said, that more of our meeting houses have been enlarged, within the last five years, and more built within the last fifteen, than had been built and enlarged for thirty years before—and yet, it is necessary for many more of our societies to lengthen their cords and strengthen their stakes. Within a small time, about an hundred persons have been regularly sent into the work of the ministry; and one of our churches has had the felicity of introducing four, the same day, into the sacred service. Multitudes of other brethren are employed, according to their abilities, in village services—reading, praying, expounding—two or three brethren from some churches, seven or eight from others; in one church seventeen persons, and in another no less than thirty offered their assistance in these services.

“Saying nothing of the mission to India, which is likely to render Bengal what England is already, a land of Bibles, such societies have been formed at home for village and itinerant preaching, as were never before heard of among the Baptists, in this country, unless the year 1689 be an exception—and a glorious exception it is. Exertions have been made all through Cornwall, and in the north of Somerset and Devon, in Shropshire, and in some parts of the neighbouring counties, by the *Baptist Itinerant Society in London*; and elsewhere, by other Societies, not without effect. To these efforts there has been scarcely any opposition, nor is opposition much to be feared in any part of his Majesty’s dominions. Almost the whole country is open for village preaching, and if there be a hamlet in a thousand where ministers cannot, with comfort, preach out of doors, rooms and houses may be registered at a small expense; and if this is done, which we earnestly recommend, the gospel will be heard not only while the summer weather lasts, but it is probable all the year round.

“As to the academy at Bristol, under the presidency of our excellent friend Dr Ryland, it is full of students; several have applied for admission, who cannot be received at present.

Two or three seminaries on a smaller scale, in different parts of England, are just opening, and it is a question of new discussion, whether a number of them, all through the kingdom, cannot be raised; in each of which two or three young men, retaining their former stations, and either partially or wholly their several occupations, might be considerably assisted in reading and study, and trained to greater usefulness, by capable pastors near the spot, who might give them two, three, or more lessons a week, as the mutual circumstances of such ministers and students admitted."

The Antinomian error, in regard to the moral law not being obligatory on a believer as the rule of a Christian's moral conduct, greatly prevailed at the close of this century. The managers of the Baptist fund found it difficult, in some cases, to distinguish between those brethren who held the doctrines of Calvinism according to the views of Dr. Gill and Mr. Brine, and those who had embraced the views of William Huntingdon, S. S. and others of his school. To bring this matter to a test, the following note was sent in December, 1798, by the secretary, to a Baptist minister in the country. I copy it from the original in the hand-writing of the Rev. Abraham Booth:—

"Dear Sir,

"The managers of the particular Baptist fund having heard a report, *that you deny the moral law to be the rule of a believer's moral conduct*, I was, at their last meeting, directed to inquire into the truth of that report.

"Now, Sir, my inquiry is not, whether you believe that this moral law should be regarded by real Christians *as prescribing the condition of obtaining everlasting life*, or, whether you consider their imperfect obedience to it *as at all concerned in their justification before God?* for those things are entirely out of the question with every one that knows any thing of the genuine gospel. Nor is it, whether you believe that *every particular* contained in the *ten commands*, as recorded by the pen of Moses, ought to be considered as constituting *a part* of the Christian's rule of moral conduct; for it must be allowed by all, that some few things contained in those commands as they stand in the

1798.]

The Moral Law a Rule of Conduct.

Pentateuch respected the Hebrew nation, and the Mosaic æconomy only. But the question is, whether you believe that the moral law, as briefly expressed in those words, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*, is the rule of a Christian's moral conduct? or whether, on the contrary, you consider a true believer as *having nothing at all to do with the moral law*? Requesting an explicit answer in the course of this month, and hoping it will be not only sincere, but also satisfactory,

“ I remain yours, &c.

“ Benjamin Tomkins, Secretary.”

The minister to whom this was addressed having returned a satisfactory answer, the usual grant was made out of the fund; thus, as in the instance of *Arianism* and *Socinianism* in Mr. Robinson's case, they resolutely opposed themselves to *Antinomianism*, and I feel persuaded they would also in a similar manner in regard to *Arminianism*: they act upon the principle that, as they are merely distributors of the bounty of others, they can only exhibit aid to those for whose use the bounty was provided, viz. *Particular or Calvinistic Baptists*.

The Rev. John Martin, of London, January 14, 1798, preached a sermon at the Lord's day evening lecture, Broad Street Chapel, from Coloss. iii. 2. “ But ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” The reader will recollect, that at this period the public mind was greatly agitated by fears of a French invasion; and it was this circumstance that led the Dissenters to attach so much importance to a statement of Mr. Martin's in that sermon, viz. “ That should the French land, some, yea many of these different and differing people, [the Dissenters,] would unite to encourage the French, and to distress this country, provided they had a fair opportunity,”

The Rev. Abraham Booth, the senior Baptist minister in London, on being informed of the circumstance, sent Mr. Martin the following friendly letter :—

“ Chambers Street, January 19, 1798.

“ Dear Sir,

“ Not having an opportunity of calling upon you; and having

Sermon at the Broad Street Lecture.

[1799.]

heard with great surprise and grief, that in your sermon at Broad Street, the last Lord's day evening, you confidently declared it to be your opinion, *That were the French to invade this country great numbers of the Baptists, and great numbers of the Pædobaptists also, would join the hostile invader*; I take the liberty of requesting information, whether you said any thing to that effect? And if you did, whether you really *intended* to involve great numbers of Dissenters, both Baptists and Pædobaptists, in so severe a censure, or *whether it was inadvertently* spoken? Favouring me with a line, your very first opportunity, would very much oblige,

Dear Sir,

Yours, A. BOOTH.

"P. S. Accept of thanks for a copy of *Thoughts on Elocution*."

Mr. Martin sent the following reply to Mr. Booth:—

"Great Russel Street, Bloomsbury.

"Dear Sir,

'If you will inform me who are my enemies, and why they have neither written or spoken to me on the subject you have mentioned, you will oblige

Your respectful servant,

JOHN MARTIN."

On Tuesday, January 30, 1799, four managers of the Lecture in Broad Street waited on Mr. Martin to obtain some explanation of the following offensive expressions:—"Perhaps some of you will say, 'I fear the French will come.' Well, what if they do? what then? If Christ is your life, what have you to fear? you will say, 'Some of your denomination will join them;' I believe they will. *Baptized Infidels!* ye worse for mending, washed to fouler stains! perhaps you will say, 'Some of the Pædobaptists will join them;' I believe they will."

The managers met again at the vestry, Broad Street meeting, on Monday, the 15th day of February. The treasurer, Samuel Burton, in the chair, and a numerous company: when the sub-committee, who were appointed on January 26 to wait on Mr. Martin, reported that he acknowledged having used the expressions attributed to him, and in the course of conversation, he

1799.]

Sermon at the Broad Street Lecture.

attempted to justify the same ; it was therefore concluded, "That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the expressions used upon that occasion are an ill-founded calumny, and have a tendency to bring the dissenting interest into undeserved disgrace. Resolved, that we consider Mr. Martin as no longer a proper person to join with the other ministers in the services of this lecture."

These resolutions were communicated to Mr. Martin, and he acknowledges in his reply, that they had not overcharged his meaning. He adds, in reply to the resolution:—"I wish gentlemen, what I said at Broad Street, which has fallen under your censure, was incredible ; but you know it is not : and perhaps are vexed on that account. I had nothing personal in view in making use of those expressions you were unable to bear. I thought in my heart that every sensible man admitted, that French armies had every where succeeded, mainly in proportion as French principles were previously received. I thought it was generally acknowledged we had more to fear from disunion amongst ourselves, than from all the forces our enemies are able to raise. I thought almost every body believed there were at present weak and bad men of every denomination ; and that most people supposed there was also a decided majority in each that would watch the motions, and prevent, as far as possible, the ill effects of their misbehaviour. That Dissenters are not less contaminated with French principles than other people appeared to me incontrovertible ; and I could not imagine that to say such was my belief, in any company, would have excited surprise.—Is it possible, gentlemen, you can consider what pamphlets have been published, what debates have been raised, and what conversations have abounded of late in this country, (with and without reserve,) and affect to deny, that some Dissenters in it have been very imprudent ? Or can you doubt whether some of them, as well as others, have wished to plant what they call the Tree of Liberty in Great Britain ?" *

The Society of Baptist ministers also, of which Mr. Martin was

* A Sermon, &c. preached at the Lord's day evening Lecture, Broad Street, &c. By John Martin. Second Edition, 1798.

a member, deputed some of their brethren to wait upon him on this subject. The secretary of that body accordingly addressed to him the following note :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ At the request of our brethren at the Jamaica Coffee-house, Mr. Booth, Mr. Burnside, and myself, intend waiting on you (if convenient) on Monday morning next at ten o'clock, to have some conversation with you relative to a late unpleasant business.

I am respectfully yours,

WILLIAM BUTTON.”

To this communication Mr. Martin replied :—

“ Dear Sir,

“ Whatever may be your business with me I shall be glad to see you, and the friends you have mentioned, at the time appointed.

I am, respectfully yours,

JOHN MARTIN.”

The interview took place between Mr. Martin and Messrs. Booth and Button. Mr. Martin says, “ Our conversation ended by my assuring those respectable friends, that if any proper way could be advised to prevent my intended publication, I would willingly burn all my papers ; but if no such expedient could be found I must proceed.”

The Rev. Messrs. Booth and Button reported to their brethren, composing the society meeting at the Jamaica Coffee-house, that they could not make any impression on the mind of Mr. Martin that he had done wrong, nor could they prevail on him to make any concession ; he, on the contrary, stated that his sermon would be printed.

Soon after this a printed copy of Mr. Martin's sermon was laid before that Society, when, it appearing from it that Mr. Martin had acknowledged that the managers of the Broad Street lecture “ had not overcharged the preacher's meaning,” the Society of ministers adopted the following resolutions :—

1798.]

Remarks on the Conduct of Mr. Martin.

"Jamaica Coffee House, March 13, 1798.

"1. That to the best of our knowledge and belief, the representation which Mr. Martin has given of the Dissenters does not apply to any individual in any of our Protestant Dissenting Churches.

"2. That Mr. Martin's representations, not appearing to be founded in fact, are considered by us as highly calumnious.

"3. Resolved *nem. con.* That Mr. Martin be therefore no longer a member of the society."

Notwithstanding all that Mr. Martin has advanced in his attempt to vindicate his conduct on this occasion, when the inflamed state of the public mind at the time in respect to the French Revolution is considered, it must surely be admitted, that he was guilty of great indiscretion and unkindness towards his brethren, the Dissenters, in making such an exaggerated and unjust representation. Had he acknowledged the statement to have been made "inadvertently," according to the hint in Mr. Booth's letter, there is no doubt but it would have been passed over by both the managers of the lecture, and the Society of Baptist ministers. But when he refused to do this, and published his offensive statement respecting his opinion, that some of the Dissenters had wished to "plant the Tree of French Revolutionary Liberty in Great Britain," they then had no alternative but to *protest*, by some decided measures, against his conduct, or to submit to the implied obloquy which had been cast upon them. It was not a matter of trifling consideration, after the high character which the Dissenters had obtained by their loyalty towards the Princes of the Royal House of Brunswick, and their ardent attachment to the principles of the British Constitution, to be charged, and by a minister of respectability and influence in the heart of the City of London, and in a large congregation composed of some of the chief persons of the three denominations, with being desirous of assisting French Revolutionists to overthrow the monarchy and constitution of their country for the purpose of introducing a national assembly and republican licentiousness. It is a good maxim, that he who exhibits a

charge without proof defames; and in this instance Mr. Martin has shewn, by his inconclusive defence, that he could produce no evidence in support of the very serious charges which had tended to throw a veil of suspicion over the principles and conduct of some of the most loyal and constitutional of all his Majesty's subjects.*

There can be no doubt but many, perhaps nearly all the Protestant Dissenters at the commencement of the French Revolution, felt and reasoned as one of the most respectable of our ministers has expressed himself on the subject. He says, "At the commencement of this memorable struggle for liberty I rejoiced—rejoiced in the hope that we should quickly see a wretched people emancipated from their bondage, and put in possession of their just rights. I rejoiced in the prospect of happiness being more universally and equally enjoyed—I rejoiced, above all, at the thought, that the captivity in which the Roman hierarchy had held the consciences of men was now about to be led captive, and the light of truth, both natural and divine, was just dawning on this wretched kingdom, and would quickly dispel the horrid mists of ignorance and vice which had for ages darkened and polluted it." †

The Protestant Dissenter's Magazine for April, 1798, contains a review of Mr. Martin's sermon, and of a letter which had been published in reply to it. It is said by the editors of that work, "We trust no individual would be found so base, so unprincipled, and insensible of his obligations and privileges, as to be guilty of the conduct censured in the sermon. And we are persuaded, that, *as a body*, the Protestant Dissenters in a time of trial would, as formerly, evidence that they are firm supporters of that constitution and government under which it is their happiness to live."

I have been the more particular on this subject, to prevent any stain being made by Mr. Martin's statements, on the

* In Feb. 1805, an attempt was made, which was ineffectual, to bring about a reconciliation between Mr. Martin and his brethren, and thus to restore him to the society of approved ministers of the general body.

† Dr. S. Stennett's Trip to Holyhead, in April, 1793.

1785.]

Origin of the Sunday School Society.

character of Protestant Dissenters in regard to constitutional loyalty.

The establishment in London of the Sunday School Society ought to have been mentioned as occurring in 1785. Its founder was Mr. William Fox, a deacon of the Baptist Church in Prescott Street, under the care of the Rev. Abraham Booth. Mr. Fox had for many years been meditating a plan for the universal education of the poor, and as Lord of the Manor of Clapton near Bourton-on-the-water, the place of his birth, had founded a free day school for the children of the parish. At a meeting of Baptists held at the King's-head Tavern, in May, this year, he first proposed his plan publicly; and at a subsequent meeting it was adopted by the gentlemen present, who opened a subscription, and appointed a provisionial committee, to draw up a plan, &c. to be submitted to another meeting fixed for August. To an observation of the chairman, Mr. Keene, a deacon of the church in Maze Pond, who said, addressing Mr. Fox, "I suppose, Sir, you intend to confine the society to our own denomination, and then we shall act in harmony," the excellent Mr. Fox thus replied—"I shall not be contented, Sir, until every person in the world is able to read the Bible, and therefore we must call upon all the world to help us."

Before the appointed next meeting Mr. Fox had heard of the *Sunday Schools* which had been founded in the neighbourhood of Gloucester by Robert Raikes, Esq. This plan he instantly adopted, and proposed it to that meeting. This admirable Society were at length formed at the Paul's-head Tavern, Cateaton Street, Sept. 5th, with considerable patronage. The committee was formed of equal proportions of churchmen and dissenters; the first instance of the kind, but which has subsequently been imitated by many other institutions. The principle of the Society for promoting an effective union was, "That the Bible should be the only school book given by the Society, excluding all catechisms."

For several years the Society supported many schools in various parts of the country, but having to provide payment for the teachers, in addition to giving spelling books, and bibles and

testaments, it was attended with such a heavy expense, that its universality (according to the wish of its founder) was prevented. This defect has since been supplied by gratuitous teachers having undertaken to conduct the Sunday schools, and this consummation Mr. Fox was spared to witness. He died at Cirencester in 1825, aged ninety-one years.

A noble act of individual liberality deserves to be recorded; the erection of a new meeting-house in Keppel Street, for the Baptist congregation, under the care of the Rev. John Martin. William Ashlin, Esq. one of the deacons of the church, made this liberal proposal at a church-meeting:—"My friends, if you are still of opinion that a larger and better place of worship is wanting, I will undertake to build one of that description at my own expense. The place I am in treaty about for that purpose is on the Duke of Bedford's estate, at the east end of Store Street, nearly opposite the back part of the British Museum; when the building is finished I will say, **THERE IT IS.** Should it meet with your approbation, you may give me just what you please.—None of our friends shall be pressed to subscribe a single guinea; but I am willing to accept whatever you or others may be disposed to subscribe. I have only to add, when I have done my best to give you satisfaction, if you then resolve to remove from this place to that, the new meeting shall be vested in trustees, chosen by yourselves, in such a manner as you and they shall approve."

The first brick of the new meeting-house was laid by Mrs. Ashlin, April 29, 1794, and on the 28th of June, 1795, it was opened for public worship. The whole expense amounted to 3475*l.* and towards this the church and congregation had subscribed 1700*l.* Mr. Martin preached at the opening of the meeting-house from Acts xiv. 7, "*And there they preached the gospel.*" This conduct of the late Mr. Ashlin is a fine example for Baptists of opulence to imitate. Had that description of persons in London employed part of their wealth, after the period of the revolution, in building meeting-houses, instead of renting the city halls, it is most likely many of the churches which have become extinct would have been perpetuated.

1804.] *Intolerant! Enactments of the Jamaica Assembly.*

In the spring of the year, 1804, it was made known in England that the assembly of Jamaica had passed an act, by which very severe enactments were provided to punish those persons who should presume to preach or teach without their license. Those who had been employed in preaching before the passing of this act had, since its enactment, been refused licenses by the magistrates, and, with one single exception, the toleration act was totally suspended in that colony, as no public preaching, nor meetings for social prayer among the Dissenters were permitted; one person, too, who had been refused a license, having ventured to preach without it, had suffered a rigorous imprisonment.*

On this subject three of our ministers, venerable for age, and respectable for talents and learning, the Rev. Messrs. Booth, Fuller, and Hall, drew up and presented a memorial to the lords of the committee of his Majesty's council, praying that their lordships would be pleased to advise his Majesty not only to disallow the present law, but also to refuse his assent to any and every proposed modification of it, which would recognize a power in the magistrates to refuse licenses, either to preachers, or for places of worship. In support of the facts contained in the memorial, many authentic proofs were appended.

To this memorial a reply was soon received, viz. that the act of the colonial legislature was disallowed by the privy council; but that a new law would be recommended by the government for the purpose of preventing designing men (referring to negro preachers) from collecting assemblies of blacks and people of colour.

Soon afterwards, in June, 1804, the committee of deputies addressed a memorial to the colonial board of trade, beseeching their lordships not to permit any instructions to be forwarded to Jamaica that might have a tendency to abridge or annul the toleration laws, without first affording them an opportunity of stating their objections to those instructions. In April, 1805, the committee were informed that, in consequence of the order of

* Every act of the legislature of Jamaica is binding, unless disallowed by the king in council within twelve months.

his Majesty in council disallowing the act of assembly, the dissenting ministers in Jamaica had resumed their stations.

Nothing more was heard of this subject till August, 1807, when the deputies received a letter from a man of colour in Jamaica, a Baptist minister, accompanied by a copy of an ordinance which had been passed by the common-council of the town of Kingston, of the preceding 15th of June. By this law it was enacted, that no place of worship was to be opened in Kingston, except the Methodist chapel. Acting under the advice of his Majesty's attorney-general, and James Stephen, Esq. now a master in chancery, they resolved to appeal to the supreme court of judicature in Jamaica, and to recommend the Baptist minister to re-open his place of worship, promising him pecuniary and other aid in the event of a prosecution being commenced against him.

On the 25th of March, 1808, the committee of the deputies were informed, that, by a new consolidated slave law passed by the governor, council, and assembly of Jamaica, on the 28th of November, 1807, and which was to take effect the 1st of December following, Dissenters of every description were prevented from preaching to the slaves: and in March, 1809, the committee addressed a memorial to his Majesty's government, requesting that the consolidated slave law might not be sanctioned by his majesty.

The attention paid by his Majesty's government to this remonstrance was soon apparent. Lord Bathurst, the president of the board of trade, sent the committee of the deputies information, that the act passed by the legislature of Jamaica, respecting preaching to the slaves, which contained a provision subversive of the principles of toleration, as recognized in the united kingdom, had been disallowed by his Majesty in council. The order sent to these Jamaica persecutors and others, was in the following words:—

“ Additional Instructions to the Governors of his Majesty's Islands in the West Indies.

“ It is our will and pleasure, and we do hereby require and command. that you do not, on any pretence whatever, give your assent to any law or laws to be passed concerning religion,

1804.]

Mr. Fuller's Controversy.

until you shall have first transmitted to us, through our principal secretary of state, the drift of such bill or bills, and shall have received our royal pleasure thereupon ; unless you take care in passing such bill or bills, that a clause, or clauses, be inserted therein, suspending and deferring the execution thereof until our will and pleasure shall be known thereupon."

In the year 1804, Mr. Andrew Fuller followed up what had been begun by Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, and published his new sentiments respecting the manner in which the gospel invitations should be addressed to unconverted sinners. His work was entitled, "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation ; or, The Obligations of Men fully to credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known ; wherein is considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of those where the Gospel comes in that matter."

This publication led to a very serious controversy, which for some years greatly agitated and divided the churches. Of Mr. Fuller's opponents, those of the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists were the Rev. Messrs. Button and Martin, of London, and of the General or Arminian Baptists, the Rev. Dan. Taylor.*

* Mr. Fuller published on this controversy, in 1787, a defence of a treatise entitled, "The Gospel of Christ, &c." containing a reply to Mr. Button's remarks, and the observations of Philanthropos.

Some time afterwards, another pamphlet was published under the signature of Agnostos, entitled, "The Reality and Efficacy of Divine Grace, with the certain Success of Christ's Suffering in behalf of all who finally stand : containing Remarks on the Observations of the Rev. Dan. Taylor, on Mr. Fuller's Reply to Philanthropos." Also "Remarks on Mr. Martin's Letters, in Five Letters to a Friend." Mr. Fuller ordered that this pamphlet should not be reprinted after his death. He once remarked to the writer, that he did not justify its tartness, saying, "It was six-pennyworth of whipcord." It is a remarkable circumstance, mentioned by Dr. Ryland in his Memoir of Mr. Fuller, that the anonymous work, mentioned above as a reply to the Rev. Dan. Taylor, should have been written by Mr. Fuller himself. This is so utterly unlike the manly daring of that great man in other respects, that I cannot account for it upon any other principles than either from his not being able to get any one else to answer Mr. Taylor's work, or from his feeling anxious to put an end to the controversy.

Notwithstanding the unpleasant feelings occasioned by this angry contention in the Baptist Churches, it has certainly turned out the rather for the furtherance of the gospel. Many worthy men, both ministers and others, did not well understand the grand principle on which the controversy turned, viz. the obvious distinction between a natural and a moral inability, as applicable to the nature of human depravity. If the disbelief of the gospel, and a rejection of the promises of pardon and salvation, arose from a want of ability, not occasioned by the corrupted state of the human will, then of course the unbeliever was the object of pity, not of blame; but if these were produced in the heart through a love of sin, and the influence of pride, giving a preference to sinful courses, and despising the grace of the gospel, then the whole blame fell upon the sinner, and every mouth will be stopped, and the infinite Jehovah not be charged foolishly as being the author of sin.

Mr. Fuller, too, by some of his explanations respecting the sufficiency of the atonement as a sacrifice equal in value to have effected the salvation of all mankind, was supposed to have pleaded for universal redemption; nothing, I am persuaded, was farther from his intention, as he considered the Holy Spirit's application of the atonement confined to the objects of the Father's election, and of the Son's redemption. The writer has long been of opinion that, if instead of proving by the above representations the general invitations of the gospel to the unconverted to be scriptural, it would be much more easily supported, and be better understood, by a reference to the manner in which the Lord Jesus and his inspired apostles preached the gospel. Who can deny but that those infallible specimens support the practice of calling on the unconverted to "repent and believe the gospel;" to "labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life," &c. or, according to the address of the apostle Peter to Simon the conjurer, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God," &c. even though he perceived him to be "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity."

The king, on his way to the House of Peers, in the year 1800, was attempted to be assassinated in the state coach. The minis-

1800.]

Congratulatory Address to the King.

ters of the general body, for the purpose of expressing their sense of this providential interposition, on behalf of his Majesty, and the nation, met on the 27th of May, at Dr. Williams's library, and agreed to an address. The secretary of state appointed the 11th of June to receive the deputation: the following account of the manner in which his Majesty received them is of a gratifying description:—

“The Dissenting Ministers, when they present as a body, are always received on the throne; but when as a committee, they are received in the closet: this is an honour they claim, and which they never dispense with. Accordingly his Majesty retired to the closet, where he was attended by Lord Chancellor Loughborough. In a few minutes, according to the usual etiquette, they were politely introduced by the lord in waiting, when the following address to his Majesty was properly read by Mr. Thompson; and the answer to it was very distinctly read by the king:

“TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

“Most gracious Sovereign,

“We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to approach your royal person to express the astonishment and horror with which we have contemplated the late atrocious attempt on your Majesty's life—a life in various respects important and estimable, and peculiarly endeared to us by gratitude, for the confirmation and increase of those privileges which we have enjoyed under your Majesty's reign, and by the pleasing hope of their uninterrupted continuance. Whilst we participate, in a very high degree, the joy that has been universally felt and testified on the present occasion, we have devoutly acknowledged the providential protection which your Majesty experienced in the season of danger, and the magnanimity and self-possession which you were enabled to exercise in circumstances so justly alarming, not only to yourself but to your affectionate family, and to every British subject.

“Our gratitude for your Majesty's deliverance has been accom-

His Majesty's gracious Reply.

[1800.]

panied with fervent supplications for the unmolested duration of your desirable life, and for your protracted enjoyment of every personal, domestic, and national blessing.

“To your Majesty's royal person and family we feel an affectionate attachment derived from our ancestors, which, having cherished with peculiar satisfaction, we shall transmit, under the protection and favour of which we are ambitious not to be thought undeserving, to our descendants.

“At that distant period to which we trust your Majesty's reign will be prolonged, no less for the happiness of your faithful subjects of every description, than to your own honour, may the crown descend, with the lustre of your princely virtues, to your successor, and continue in your illustrious family to the latest generation.”

To the above address His Majesty was pleased to return the following most gracious answer:—

“I thank you for this dutiful and loyal address. The declaration of your attachment to those principles of affection which you and your ancestors have always professed to my person and family, must secure to you the continuance of my favour and protection.

“I am persuaded that I cannot make so acceptable a return for the merciful protection which the Divine Providence has vouchsafed to me, as by an unremitting perseverance in my endeavours to maintain the privileges, and to promote the happiness and welfare, of all my subjects.”

“The ministers now kissed the king's hand, and retired from the royal presence, according to the forms of court, not unambitious of having had this pleasing opportunity of shewing their cordial respect to their sovereign, but highly gratified with their gracious reception.”

The Rev. Josiah Thompson, a Baptist, who presented the address, was the senior of all the ministers, and had formerly been (as is mentioned in a previous volume) pastor of the Baptist church of Unicorn-yard, London.

1802.]

Another Address to the King on Peace.

The blessing of peace having been restored to the nation, the general body of ministers presented, on the 27th of May, 1802, an address to his Majesty : who received them graciously in the closet. The Rev. Dr. Abraham Rees presented the address, which was as follows :—

“ Most gracious Sovereign,

“ We, your Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers in and about the cities of London and Westminster, approach your royal presence with profound respect ; to testify the gratitude and satisfaction which we feel on the termination of the calamities of war, and on the restoration of Peace, not only to your Majesty’s dominions, but to Europe in general.

“ We participate the joy which your Majesty must have experienced on the present happy occasion ; and we are thankful for the result of those operations and councils which have produced effects so interesting to our country and to the world.

“ We beg leave to express our cordial wishes that the blessing of Peace may be uninterrupted, and that it may conduce to the stability of your Majesty’s throne, and to the permanence of the British Constitution, and to the increasing prosperity of every part of the British Empire.

“ May your Majesty long enjoy the satisfaction of witnessing the union and welfare of the dominions over which you preside, and the prevalence of true religion and social order, under the influence of your salutary council, through the various nations of the globe. It is our earnest wish, that the blessings we possess under your Majesty’s administration may be preserved by your protection to a distant period, and transmitted, with every security and increase of which they are capable to future generations.

“ While it shall be our unremitting endeavour to extend the influence of the gospel of peace and charity, both by our instruction and example, and thus to maintain the attachment of those of your Majesty’s subjects, with whom we are immediately connected to your Majesty’s person, family, and government, it will be our unfeigned and fervent prayer, that your valuable life may be

His Majesty's gracious Reply.

[1804.]

long continued ; that when Providence removes you hence, you may exchange an earthly for a celestial crown ; and that the blessings you have perpetuated may descend, in the illustrious lives of your family, to the remotest posterity."

"To this Address his Majesty was pleased to give the following gracious answer:—

"I receive with peculiar pleasure this dutiful and loyal address, expressive of the lively satisfaction which you feel in the restoration of public peace.

"The just sense you entertain of the blessings which we enjoy under our most excellent constitution, and the cordial attachment which you manifest to my person, family, and government, are highly acceptable to me, and you may rely on the continuance of my favour and protection."

The return of peace to the nation has at all times been hailed by the Protestant Dissenters with the most lively sentiments of religious feeling. But, with the exception of people called friends, or quakers, they have been uniformly supporters of the principle, that *defensive* war is justifiable upon Christian sentiments ; as when a villain, who has attempted the life of his innocent neighbour, has justly forfeited his own life on that account, and ought to be killed, if that be necessary, to save the life of a good citizen. To oppose war as improper *under all circumstances* is in my opinion, such a refinement in christian ethics as would sometimes, if acted out, operate to the destruction of the safety and welfare of civil society.

The British and Foreign Bible Society, formed in 1804, has obtained great public support, and on many accounts has been a valuable institution. Its beginnings were truly small though it has so greatly increased. The Rev. Mr. Charles of Bala in Wales had applied to the committee of the Sunday School Society in London in 1802, for aid to print an edition of the *Welsh Bible* for gratuitous circulation. As they could not comply with his request, Mr. Charles proposed it to the committee of the Tract Society. It is said, in the "History of the Origin of this Society," (and the

1804.]

British and Foreign Bible Society.

reader will see from the quotation why it is introduced here,) "This proposition gave rise to a conversation of some length; in the course of which it was suggested, that, as Wales was not the only part of the kingdom in which such a want as had been described might be supposed to prevail, it would be desirable to take such steps as might be likely to stir up the public mind to a *general* dispersion of the Scriptures. To this suggestion, which proceeded from the Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist minister, one of the Society's present secretaries, and which was warmly encouraged by the rest of the company, we are to trace the dawn of those measures which, expanding with time and progressive discussion, issued at length in the proposal and establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

During the month of May, 1803, Mr. Hughes presented an impression of an essay, prepared in compliance with the wishes expressed at the primary meeting under the title of "The Excellence of the Holy Scriptures, an Argument for their more General Dispersion." In this essay, which may be regarded as containing the rudiments of the future society, the author expatiates on the transcendent excellence of the Holy Scriptures, enumerates the different religious societies more or less concerned in promoting their circulation, and describes the limitations of their respective constitutions, and their consequent inadequacy to the work of general distribution. Mr. Hughes then represents the importance of an association of Christians at large, with a view exclusively to the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and points out a number of advantages, both direct and collateral, which might be expected to result from the operation of such an institution.

The wide circulation of this well-written essay led to the formation of the Society, May 4, 1804, at the London Tavern Bishopsgate Street. When it was agreed, (1) "A Society shall be formed with this designation, THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider dispersion of the Holy Scriptures. (2) This Society shall add its endeavours to those employed by other Societies for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions, and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other

Statement of the Baptist Missionary Society.

[1807.]

countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, and Pagan," &c. The institution was considered as established, and more than 700*l*. were immediately subscribed. "Thus terminated," says the Rev. John Owen, one of the secretaries, "the proceedings of this extraordinary day, a day memorable in the experience of all who participated in the transactions by which it was signalized; a day to which posterity will look back, as giving to the world, and that in times of singular perturbation and distress, an institution for diffusing, on the grandest scale, the tidings of peace and salvation; a day which will be recorded as peculiarly honourable to the character of Great Britain, and as fixing an important epoch in the history of mankind."*

The Baptist Mission to India had by this time (1807) not only called forth the admiration and support of the christian population in England, but had excited the strongest marks of disapprobation from another class of persons, those who had resided in India, but had returned to England, and who, having probably become familiarized with idolatry, and of infidel sentiments in regard to christianity, thought all attempts to christianize the Hindoos, chimerical, if not dangerous to our East India possessions.

The Committee in June, this year, put forth the following statement, which, having never been published, will supply much new and important information to those readers who are not familiar with the printed proceedings of the Society.

"Various misrepresentations having gone forth concerning the Baptist Missionaries in Bengal, we feel it to be our duty to give a free and faithful account of our and their conduct from the beginning.

"The Society was formed in October, 1792. Its only origin was a strong conviction of the truth and importance of christianity, and of its being the indispensable duty of christians, by all proper means, to endeavour to promote it.

"There was, we believe, at the time, no idea in the mind of

* The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Rev. John Owen, A. M. 1816, vol. i. p 16—47.

1807.]

Statement of the Baptist Missionary Society.

any member of the Society, that India would be the seat of its labours: all they had determined was, to embrace the first opening which should present itself. Being afterwards informed of the moral and religious state of the Hindoos: of their willingness to listen to addresses on christianity, and of there being no other christian missionaries, of any denomination, in Bengal at the time, we considered it as a proper object of attention, and resolved, if possible, on making our first effort in that quarter.

“ Our two first missionaries were Mr. William Carey, and Mr. John Thomas. They went out in the spring of 1793, in a Danish vessel. We were not insensible that by such a mode of going out they might be exposed to inconveniences; and had it been in our power to have sent them otherwise, we should gladly have done so. But as there was no hope of this, we were reduced to the alternative, either to desist from what we considered our duty towards God, or to comply with it, and risk the consequences. We chose the latter, as being the principle on which the first christian missionaries went forth to evangelize all nations.

“ No inquiry was made into the powers of the Honourable Company: but we could not suppose that it was the intention of the legislature to invest it with authority to exclude the christian religion from the British possessions in India. Conscious that we had no design of our missionaries interfering in the affairs of either government or trade, or that they should engage in any service or secular employment, unless it were for their own immediate support, we did not consider ourselves as violating the spirit of the law which forbids Europeans to go to India without leave of the Company; that law having for its object the prevention of interlopers in trade.

“ Conscious also of the purity of our intentions, and persuaded that no other course would be pursued by the missionaries than that of peaceable, faithful, and loyal subjects, we committed them to the care of Him in whose cause they had embarked, not doubting but that, as soon as they should be known, their conduct would recommend them to the protection, if not to the esteem of government. These hopes have been realized. They have, by their good conduct and talents, not only recommended themselves to general esteem, but to the confidence of the first

authorities in the state ; nor are they accused in a single instance of having done any thing to forfeit the one or the other. All that know them, know that they have but one end in view, which is the diffusion of christianity. Whatever they receive, whether from their own labours, or the contributions of others, all is devoted to this object.

“ In 1799, finding the laws of the company unfavourable to a settlement in the British territories, they were necessitated to retire to the Danish town of Serampore, where to this day they have received much kindness from the Danish governors, and the most honourable testimonies of their esteem.

“ On May 8th, 1801, when Serampore was taken by the English, the missionaries were desired to appear at the government-house. On presenting themselves, they were told by the Danish governor, that they might go on with their school, preaching, &c. in the same peaceful way as before. The English commissioner also politely apologized for having given them the trouble of coming, assuring them that they were at perfect liberty to follow their callings as usual.

“ As to their measures, all that they have done may be comprehended in four things ; namely, preaching to the natives, opening schools for instructing those children, gratis, whose parents choose to send them, distributing religious tracts, and translating, printing, and circulating the scriptures.

“ Three or four years ago, they were interrupted by certain magistrates up the country, and some of the tracts sent to Calcutta, where they were translated and read before the Council ; but nothing improper was found in them.

“ In all their labours they have uniformly avoided every thing which might convey an idea to the people, that they were employed by government, nor do the natives in general view them in any other light than as a voluntary religious society, proposing to their free consideration the christian doctrine.

“ Till of late, government appeared to be kindly disposed towards them. Having had full proof of their character and deportment, they were willing to give every facility to their labours, short of authoritative patronage ; and this was never desired. From the autumn of 1805, however, they began to be treated by

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the country magistrates in a different manner. Once they were interrupted when distributing tracts, and sent home, and once, when they were not distributing tracts, nor preaching, they were interrogated, and commanded to return to Serampore.

“The first of these interruptions occasioned an application to government for permission to itinerate, and form stations in the country. The request was not granted; but his Excellency Sir George Barlow, in a public speech, since printed, acknowledged, with approbation, ‘The Society of Protestant Missionaries at Serampore.’ And when the design of translating the Scriptures into the eastern languages was communicated to him, and permission asked to form a committee for superintending it, though he declined all personal engagement in it, and disapproved of the appointment of a committee, yet he expressed himself in terms of friendship towards the undertaking, and the mission; giving full liberty to advertise, to collect voluntary subscriptions, and to translate: adding, ‘Let the missionaries go on in their present line of action.’

“In 1805 a piece of ground was obtained for the purpose of building a place of worship in Calcutta. The missionaries contributed largely to this object. Conscious that they were cordially attached to the British government, and knowing they had lived nearly seven years in a manner under its eye, and received from it many marks of confidence, they had no reason to expect opposition from this quarter. They did not proceed, however, without first privately inquiring whether the measure would be disagreeable to government. Understanding that it would not, they purchased the ground, and proceeded to erect a temporary shed for preaching to the natives. Considerable numbers attended; some approved, others disapproved. There was, however, no tumult which could in any wise interrupt the peace and good order of the city. Nobody considered it as any attempt on the part of government, to make the people Christians: and however some might dislike it, especially among the Brahmans, yet that dislike was only expressed in words, and was not directed against government, but merely against the missionaries, and the christian natives.

“On August 23rd, 1806, two missionaries, namely, Messrs. Chater and Robinson, arrived in the American ship, Benjamin Franklin, Captain Wickes. On presenting themselves at the police office, some demur was made as to their being permitted to proceed to Serampore. Next day, on Mr. Carey’s going to the office, he was told by one of the magistrates, that they had a message to him from the governor-general, and which was, ‘That as government did not interfere with the prejudices of the natives, it was his request, that Mr. Carey and his colleagues would not.’ This request, as explained by the magistrates, amounted to this—‘They were not to preach to the natives, nor suffer the native converts to preach; they were not to distribute religious tracts, nor suffer their people to distribute them; they were not to send forth converted natives, nor to take any step, by conversation or otherwise, for persuading the natives to embrace christianity.’

“Mr. Carey inquired if they had any written communication from the governor-general, and was answered in the negative. He then took leave of them, assuring them that neither he, nor his brethren, wished to do any thing disagreeable to government, from which they could conscientiously abstain.

“Some of the foregoing particulars, however, were softened in a subsequent conversation between the magistrates and a friend to the missionaries. ‘It was not meant,’ they then said, ‘to prohibit Mr. Carey or his brethren from preaching at Serampore, or in their own house at Calcutta, only they must not preach at the Loll Bazar. It was not intended to prevent their circulating the scriptures, but merely the tracts, abusing the Hindoo religion;* and that there was no design to forbid the

* The term *abusing*, however, was inapplicable to the subject. They tended no doubt to overturn idolatry; but not by *abuse*. It is one of their printed rules “Not to attack the prejudices of the natives by exhibiting with acrimony the sins of their gods; nor on any account to do violence to their images; nor interrupt their worship: but to treat them with gentleness and affection, knowing that the real conquests of the gospel are those of love. Another of their printed rules is thus expressed:—“As we consider it our duty to honour the civil magistrate, and in every state and country to render him the readiest obedience, whe-

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native christians conversing with their countrymen on christianity, only they must not go out under the sanction of the missionaries.'

"In this conversation, though it was at a time when the Vellore mutiny greatly occupied men's minds, yet no hint was given as if any efforts of the missionaries had in any way contributed to it, or to any thing of the kind. On the contrary, the magistrates freely acknowledged, that 'they were well satisfied with their character and deportment, and that no complaint had ever been lodged against them.'

"Notwithstanding this, an order of council was passed, commanding Messrs. Chater and Robinson to return to Europe, and refusing Captain Wickes a clearance unless he took them back with him.

"This order being communicated to the missionaries, they represented to government, 'that Captain Wickes cleared out from Rotterdam for Serampore; that his clearing out from England for Serampore was no more than a necessary step to accomplish the first intended voyage; that Messrs. Chater and Robinson were then at Serampore, and had joined the mission under their direction, and the protection of the king of Denmark.'

"This representation produced an inquiry, Whether the missionaries were actually under the protection of the Danish government, or whether they only lived at Serampore from choice, as being a convenient situation? To this inquiry an answer was sent by the Danish governor, stating 'that on the missionaries first coming to reside at Serampore, the late governor had repre-

ther we be persecuted or protected, it becomes us to instruct our native brethren in the same principles. A sense of gratitude, too, presses this obligation upon us in a peculiar manner, in return for the liberal protection we have experienced. It is equally our wisdom and our duty also to shew to the civil power, that it has nothing to fear from the progress of missions, since a real follower of Christ must resist the example of his great Master, and all the precepts the Bible contains on this subject, before he can become disloyal. Converted heathens being brought over to the religion of their governors, if duly instructed, are much more likely to love them and be united to them, than subjects of a different religion.'

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sented to his court that their conduct was such as he highly approved, and that their residence there was likely to be useful to the settlement; that to this an answer had been sent by the Court of Copenhagen, approving of their settling at Serampore, and requiring him to extend his protection to the mission; that in virtue of this high authority he had taken Messrs. Chater and Robinson under the protection of his Danish Majesty; and that the missionaries were not to be considered as persons in debt, who were barely protected, but as persons under the patronage of the Danish government.'

"The whole of this proceeding, it should be observed, did not arise from any application on the part of the missionaries. It was not choice, but necessity that first fixed them at Serampore; nor did they desire to be under Danish protection in preference to that of their native country: but when such protection was offered them by the former, they could do no other than gratefully accept it.

"When the answer of the Danish governor had been presented, Captain Wickes applied at the police-office for a clearance. At first he was told that the order of council had been confirmed; but being soon after sent for by the magistrates, they amicably conversed the matter over. He stated to them that 'the missionaries were willing, if fair and friendly representation could not prevail, rather than oppose government, to give up the two brethren. He added, that though it might be a serious affair both with America and Denmark, if he and the missionaries were to be obstinate, yet they each considered the peace and good understanding of nations to be a matter of such importance, that they would give up almost any thing rather than be the occasion of interrupting it.'

"On this statement Captain Wickes was furnished with the necessary papers for his departure. As government however appeared to be dissatisfied with the continuance of the two missionaries to remove every subject of complaint as far as they could, a new mission to the kingdom of Burmah was contemplated, and Mr. Chater, with another brother, agreed to go to that country, to make observations on its practicability.

"Such are the facts which have come to our knowledge.

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Whatever be the cause, or the issue of the late measures, they are not owing to any improper conduct of the missionaries; nor to any ill effects which have arisen from their exertions. Loose rumours have indeed been circulated both in India and in England, that their exertions had some influence in producing the tragical mutiny at Vellore: but besides the consideration of that event being fully accounted for by another cause, it is inconceivable that their influence should extend to the native soldiers, among whom there is not an individual, we believe, who has embraced christianity; and possibly not one who has so much as heard of the missionaries; and of those at Vellore, not one who understands the language in which they preach and write. Add to this, if nothing like tumult, sedition, or dissatisfaction with government ever appeared to result from their labours in Bengal, it is incredible that such effects should be produced by them at a thousand miles distance, where neither tracts nor testaments, nor any other papers, unless it were a gazette containing an advertisement of the translation of the scriptures, in a language which they did not understand, were circulated! Such rumours therefore prove nothing, except it be the want of better evidence, or a desire to catch at something which may be turned against christianity, or a wish to shift a part of the blame of a melancholy catastrophe. No one can be ignorant of the difference between measures of force, and those of mild persuasion.*

“‘No political evil,’ say the missionaries in letters to their friends, ‘can reasonably be feared from the spread of christianity now; for it has been publicly preached in different parts of Bengal for about twenty years past, without the smallest symptom of the kind. Within the last five years an edition of the New Testament of two thousand copies, nearly one of the Pentateuch of a thousand, one of Matthew of five hundred, and one of the Psalms and Isaiah of a thousand, besides many copies of a second edition of the New Testament, and of the poetical books of scripture from Job to Canticles; and many religious tracts, have been

* It is now generally understood that this mutiny arose from an injudicious military order, which interfered with the religious prejudices of the natives.

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distributed among the natives, without a single instance of disturbance, unless the abusive language of a few loose persons may be so called.' To this might be added, the experience of the missionaries on the coast, who have taught christianity for an hundred years, and reckon about forty thousand persons who have embraced it. Such long-continued exertions to spread the gospel, carried on to such an extent, and in such different situations, without producing the smallest inconvenience, may, we presume, furnish a course of experience sufficient to remove every suspicion of political evil arising from the introduction of christianity.

" 'Thousands of heathens,' they add, 'are willing to hear the gospel: but we are forbidden to preach it! Had it been by an idolatrous power, we might have been prepared to endure whatever sufferings might have been inflicted upon us: but the idea of being forbidden to spread christianity, by a christian government, confounds us. Resistance to the powers that be, never made any part of our plan. We have hitherto obeyed those who have been set over us, not from constraint, but with a willing mind: and must we now be reduced, and that by a British government, to the cruel alternative of disobeying them, or God? We will commit our cause to Him that judgeth righteously, trusting in Him to incline our rulers to reconsider the matter, and grant us permission to fulfil the most indispensable of all duties, our duty to God: for 'Wo unto us if we preach not the gospel!' Meanwhile, we have this consolation, that we do not suffer as evil doers, or as busy bodies in other men's matters. The tongue of slander itself has not been able to charge us, or any of the native converts, with the least deviation from the laws and government under which we live. How should it; when we are devoted from our very hearts to the British government; and this not from a blind partiality, but from a firm conviction of its being a blessing to the country? Had we been sent hither for the sole purpose of conciliating the natives to it, and of supporting it by every mean in our power, we could not have been more cordially attached to it, nor have pursued a line of conduct more adapted to the end. Nothing will so effectually

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establish the British dominion in India as the introduction of christianity, provided it be merely by persuasion; and nothing is more safe, and, under a divine blessing, more easy.

“With regard to safety, there is nothing to be feared from the attempt. The Hindoos resemble an immense number of particles of sand, which are incapable of forming a solid mass. There is no bond of union among them, nor any principle capable of effecting it. Their hierarchy has no head, no influential body, no subordinate orders. The Brahmins, as well as the nation at large, are a vast number of disconnected atoms, totally incapable of cohesion. In this country sin seems to have given the fullest sample of its disuniting, debilitating power. The children are opposed to the parents, and the parents to the children; brother totally disregards brother; and a Brahmin will see another Brahmin perish with the greatest apathy. Yea, for the sake of a little gain, a Brahmin will write against his gods, satisfying himself with this, that the sin belongs to his employer, and that he only does something to support himself. When to this are added their natural imbecility, and the enervating influence of climate, it will be evident that nothing is less to be apprehended than a steady, concerted opposition to the spread of christianity. Nothing will ever appear beyond that individual contempt and hatred of the gospel which are inseparable from the vicious mind.

“Instead of the introduction of christianity endangering the safety of the state, the danger arises from the other side. No one unacquainted with the natives, can know the heart of an idolater. We have about a hundred servants in our different departments; and they have been treated with a kindness which in England would have conciliated affection, and created attachment. But so far are these effects from being produced in them, that not an individual can be found amongst them who would not cheat us to any extent; or who would not plunder us of every thing we have, were it in their power. How can it be otherwise? Their religion frees them from every tie of justice. If their own benefit can be secured by any action, this renders it lawful, or at least venial, though it were fraud, robbery, or even murder. Often have we heard it affirmed, that a robber who should spend the whole night in the most atrocious deeds, and

secure plunder to the amount of a hundred rupees, would wipe off all the stain in the morning by giving one of them to a Brahman! Attachment to a master, a family, or a government of a different religion, is that which cannot be produced in the mind of a Hindoo, while under the power of his Gooroo or his Debta. But if they lose cast, and embrace christianity, not by force, but from pure conviction, they become other men. Even those who, as it may prove, have not embraced it cordially, are considerably influenced by it. If once they lose cast, the charm is broken, and they become capable of attachment to government.

“ ‘ These remarks are abundantly proved by what is seen in our native converts. We have baptized above a hundred of them : and we dare affirm that the British government has not a hundred better subjects, and more cordial friends, among the natives of Hindoostan. The gloomy and faithless demon of superstition is dethroned in their hearts. They cannot fear a Brahman nor a Debta as heretofore. While they feel an attachment to us, to which they had been strangers, they are also cordially attached to the governors who protect them in the exercise of their religion, and whom they consider as their friends and brethren.

“ ‘ Such is the ease with which christianity, under the divine blessing, could be disseminated, that it may seem to some incredible. No public acts of government are necessary. It is not necessary that government should appear in the business ; and much less that it should be at any expense whatever. If it be only understood that no one shall be forbidden to teach christianity, and no one but the evil doer receive interruption from the magistrate, the work will go on in the most gradual and yet effectual manner. God is raising up native converts of character and talents suited to it. It is possible for ten of these brethren to enter a district, to go unobserved through the principal towns, sit down in a private circle, gently reason, convey ideas of divine truth, and turn persons from darkness to light, nearly unobserved. Thus a town, a district, a country could be leavened with the blessed gospel almost without the knowledge of the wealthy and the great, even of their own countrymen.

“ ‘ The only thing necessary for European missionaries is, that, as long as they deserve the confidence of government, they be

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permitted to fix their residence in those places which will enable them to exercise a necessary superintendence, and administer support to these native brethren ; to visit the societies which are formed ; and, as occasion offers, dispense with prudence the word of life. It were the easiest thing imaginable for government to obtain from European missionaries the most ample pledges of good behaviour, and to withdraw its protection the moment they ceased to deserve it. A good man would feel a pleasure in giving such security ; and what is more, his being a good man would itself be a security. What security could have been exacted from a Schwartz equal to that which his own wise and benevolent heart afforded ? Nor is this peculiar to Schwartz : it is the feeling of every real missionary.

“ ‘ A permission to itinerate and form missionary stations in the country (it may be five or six—the whole number of missionaries now in Bengal are but nine) so far from being injurious to the British government, would advance its essential interests. In every missionary it would have a friend, a friend whose influence and capacity of rendering service would be constantly increasing. What were the advantages which the English derived from one Schwartz in the Mysore country ? And what would be the effect of their having at this moment a hundred Schwartz’s in India, each with his train of pious, peaceable, loyal, and faithful disciples ? These messengers of peace and love (and all others we give up) would endear to the inhabitants the very nation to which they belonged. ‘ Who are these,’ they would ask, ‘ that so manifestly seek our good, and not their own ? ’ The answer, that they are English, must exhibit an idea of the government and nation which the natives can never have displayed before their eyes too often.

“ ‘ But, if a missionary could so far forget himself, and his object, as to cherish a spirit inimical to government, still, one would suppose, his own interest would correct him. To whom are he and his friends indebted for security ? Without the protection of government they would be continually in danger of being plundered and massacred. If, however, the folly of any one should render him insensible to these considerations, he must abide the consequences. Let him bear his own burden.’

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“These free, but respectful observations of the missionaries will, we hope, be candidly considered. If any part of them require apology, it is the implication that such considerations are necessary to induce British Legislators not to set themselves against Christianity; and not to refuse that to a body of Protestant missionaries, well known to government, which has always been allowed to Roman Catholics.

“It may be proper to add a few words on our own conduct as a Society, and on the patronage which we have received. We have endeavoured to avoid all ostentatious parade of our measures; but have made no secret of them. Copies of the New Testament in the Bengallee have been presented not only to the two universities, and to individuals of high rank in the country, but also to his Majesty, who was pleased graciously to accept the work, and to give it a place in his library.*

“We have publicly collected monies in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and for fourteen years have met with the most liberal support. Christians of all denominations, churchmen and dissenters, convinced that our object was not the establishment of a party, but the promotion of Christianity, have supported us. Several of the nobility and gentry, observing the good conduct and talents of the missionaries, have lent their aid.

“If our brethren follow our advice, which we suppose may be the case, they will continue to avoid every just cause of offence; they will be obedient to government in all lawful concerns; they will patiently suffer even persecution, if it be inflicted upon them; or, if driven from one situation, they will flee to another: but they will not, by any means short of compulsion, cease to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.

“We hope, for the honour and security of our country, that persecution for religion will never be revived in it, or in any of its dependences; and that if any question be brought forward by

• This was presented to his Majesty by Robert Bowyer, Esq. in the chapel at Windsor. After reading Mr. Bowyer's letter, his Majesty condescendingly said, “You will be good enough to inform the gentlemen of the Baptist Mission, that I receive the book with great pleasure and return them my best thanks, wishing them every possible success.”

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Lord Sidmouth's Bill.

these occurrences, it will not be, Whether the door shall be shut against the admission of Christianity into British India?

“Signed, by order of the Committee, at a meeting held at Northampton, June 9, 1807.

“ANDREW FULLER, SECRETARY.”

The act of toleration had not been interfered with by the legislature, since it was altered in favour of Protestant Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters, in the year 1779. But in this year, 1809, on the 2nd of June, Lord Sidmouth, in a speech delivered in the House of Lords said, that he had reason to believe many persons took out licenses as Dissenting Ministers under the Toleration Act, for no other purpose than that of obtaining an exemption from parish offices and the militia; and that some explanation of those statutes was become necessary, in order to preserve them from abuse.” His lordship, therefore, moved for an account of *licenses*, * granted in each year, in the respective counties of England and Wales, at the quarter sessions, and in the bishop’s registeries from the year 1780 to the end of the year 1808, under the acts of 1st William and Mary, and 29th of George III. This motion, on the suggestion of Lord Harrowby, was altered instead of 1780 to 1760.

In the next session of Parliament, Feb. 27, 1810, Lord Sidmouth complained that the returns ordered had been made out, but were by no means satisfactory. Another order was therefore made, and other returns in compliance with it were produced, and in the course of a few days the totals of both were the same.

By the first of these returns it appeared that the number of persons who had taken the oaths in fifty years were 1068, and

* “The use of this word,” say the deputies in the Sketch of their History, &c. p. 85, *noie*, “even for convenience sake is equally insidious and unwarrantable. No such word is used in either of the acts of parliament. The legal right which the Dissenters obtain by qualifying or registering, in no degree depends upon the discretion of the courts in which these formalities are to be complied with, nor on the granting of the certificates which the law has directed to be given to them as evidence of such compliance.”

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the number of places registered for public worship 12,161. It was stated, "Many of those places have long ago ceased to be used for public worship:" this was doubtless the fact as to a large proportion of them, many of them having been dwelling houses, and other buildings used from necessity or for temporary purposes.

Had not the Dissenters so fully explained the objections to his lordship's proposed plan for improving the Act of Toleration, it might have been thought he was ignorant of the operation of his proposed measures. But he had been fully apprized, by several gentlemen from the Society of Deputies, "That any restrictions upon persons who wished to qualify as dissenting teachers, would be very objectionable to the Dissenters at large, and therefore ought not to be imposed without adequate cause; that no evidence had been, or, as they conceived, could be, produced to shew a necessity for new restrictions: that to require a testimonial would sometimes prove very inconvenient and vexatious: that where it did not degenerate into an empty form, it would confer upon Dissenting Ministers, if *they* were to grant it, a new and obnoxious authority; or if to be granted by a man's neighbours, would lay him at their mercy: that it might be often difficult for a man, before he could safely exercise his talents, to obtain a respectable testimonial that he possessed talents: that it could scarcely fail of investing the quarter sessions with some discretionary authority, in judging of the sufficiency of the testimonial, and that this would be to subvert the very basis of toleration: that any such regulation would be directly at variance with a leading principle among the Dissenters, who held that every man had a right to propagate what he himself believed to be truth, without craving permission from others, and without being liable to any penalty, unless he infringed upon the peace and good order of society: that, as to limiting the age of preachers, so few persons, if any, were found to qualify at an unsuitable age, that no legal provision was requisite," &c.

On the subject of imposing some restriction on itinerant preaching, the deputation assured his lordship "The Dissenters would feel particularly jealous: that this would be a most serious injury to the Wesleyan ministers, who were mostly all itinerants,

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and would be strenuously opposed, upon principle, by all the Dissenters : that it would only have the effect of harassing itinerants ; for they would not be prevented from preaching when they considered it their duty, except by being cast into prison."

Notwithstanding all these considerations, which were powerfully enforced upon the attention of his lordship, he was so determined upon improving the *respectability* of Protestant Dissenters, and so desirous they should no longer have for their ministers "tailors, pig-drovers, chimney-sweepers, and persons who could neither write nor read," that he persevered in the measure, stupid and ungrateful as the Dissenters had proved themselves in not wishing to occupy so great a boon.*

On the 9th of May, 1811, his lordship rose, according to notice, to propose a bill, to "explain and render more effectual the acts of 1st of William and Mary, and the 19th of George III. so far as they relate to the same Protestant Dissenting Ministers."†

In his lordship's speech on introducing this measure he said, "Within the last thirty or forty years these acts had received a novel interpretation. At most of the quarter-sessions where the oaths were taken, and the declaration made, it was now understood, that any person whatever, however ignorant or profligate, whether he descended from the chimney or the pillory, was at liberty to put in his claim to take the oaths before the justices, to make the declaration, and also to demand a certificate which authorized him to preach any doctrine he pleased ; which exempted him besides from serving in the militia, and from many

* It should seem, however, that his lordship had been imposed upon by some of the respectable Dissenters. In his speech he declared, "he had understood, from the communications he had had with some respectable Dissenters, that they were desirous some such measure as this should be adopted, or at least that they approved of it. He was much astonished, after this, at seeing resolutions advertised upon the subject, with the *name of a member of Parliament* to them, with whom he had also had communication." It should seem that the *light* of the chairman of the deputies, Mr. William Smith, came in a very gradual manner indeed on this subject.

† This proposed bill may be read in the "Sketch of History of Deputies," note, p. 95—100.

civil burdens to which his fellow-subjects were liable. There were counties in this kingdom," his lordship said, "Devon and Buckinghamshire, where the magistrates permitted no person to qualify, unless he shewed he was in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, and the preacher and teacher of a congregation. This bill would provide that, in order for any man to obtain the qualification as a preacher, he should have the recommendation of at least six respectable housekeepers of the congregation to which he belonged, and that he should actually have a congregation that was willing to listen to his instructions. With regard to preachers who were not stationary, but itinerant; he proposed that they should bring a testimonial from six housekeepers, stating them to be of sober life and character, together with their belief that they were qualified to perform the functions of preachers."

A committee had been appointed two years before by the general body of Dissenting Ministers, to watch the progress of the bill which Lord Sidmouth had proposed to introduce on this subject. As soon as its provisions were made known, a meeting was called at the Library, Red Cross Street, May 14, and numerous attended. The Rev. Dan Taylor, a General Baptist minister, took the chair, when the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

1. "That the right of peaceably assembling, for the purpose of religious worship and public instruction according to the dictates of our own consciences, belongs to us as men, as christians, and as members of civil society; that this right ought not to be abridged or controlled, by any secular authority; and that we cannot consent to the alienation or surrender of it, without criminality on our parts, disrespect to the memory of those from whom we have, under providence, received it, and injury to the best interests of our descendants and successors; to whom it is our duty, as far as we are able, to transmit it inviolable.

2. "That this right has been recognized and maintained from the revolution to the present day, partly by a liberal construction of the Toleration Act, and partly by the protection of the illustrious Princes of the House of Brunswick; and that it would betray a want of confidence in the favour of our sovereign, in the

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justice of the legislature, and in the spirit of the times, to submit to any proposed restrictions of this right, in passive silence.

3. "That, as faithful and loyal subjects attached to the civil constitution of our country, and desirous of contributing to that tranquillity and union on which its permanence and prosperity very much depend, we cannot forbear expressing our regret that any measures should be proposed which have a tendency, by abridging our liberty as Protestant Dissenters, and restraining the exercise of social worship among those with whom we are connected, to excite dissatisfaction and discontent at the present interesting crisis: and more especially at a time when we had reason to hope our liberty would have been enlarged instead of being restrained; though we are peaceably waiting for that period in which this happy event shall take place, and penal laws no longer have any operation in the province of religion.

4. "That the bill now introduced into the House of Lords appears to us inconsistent with the unmolested liberty which we have so long thankfully enjoyed; repugnant to our principles and profession as Protestant Dissenters, who disavow the authority of the civil magistrate in the province of religion, and imposing restrictions which will be, in various respects, injurious and oppressive.

5. "That it is our duty, on our own behalf, and on behalf of our brethren, as well as with a view to the cause of religious liberty in general, to make every constitutional effort in our power for preventing this bill from passing into a law; and that for this purpose a petition be presented by this body to the House of Peers.

"DAN TAYLOR, CHAIRMAN."

The Society of Deputies met the next day and passed some very spirited and well expressed resolutions, and adopted a petition to the Lords.

This petition, it will be seen, contains the same principles as the resolutions of the ministers, and is copied to shew the union of the two bodies of the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters.

*“ To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal
in Parliament assembled.”*

“ The humble Petition of the undersigned Protestant Dissenters, residing in and near London, sheweth,

“ That your petitioners, deeply impressed with a sense of the incalculable importance of religious liberty, in the fullest extent of that phrase, are ever most willing gratefully to acknowledge the large and valuable portion of that blessing, which they have been accustomed to enjoy, and are at the same time anxious that this advantage should be transmitted undiminished to their posterity.

“ That your petitioners have therefore learned with great regret, the introduction of a bill into your lordship’s house, entitled, ‘ An Act to explain and render more effectual certain acts of the 1st of William and Mary, and the 19th of his present Majesty, so far as the same relate to Protestant Dissenting Ministers,’ which they fear will tend to impair that great principle of religious liberty which they are, above all things, desirous to vindicate and maintain, and to infringe on rights which have long been held sacred and inviolable.

“ Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your lordships will be pleased, in your wisdom, to reject the said bill.—

“ And your petitioners shall ever pray.”

On the same day a very numerous and respectable meeting of Protestant Dissenters of various denominations, and other friends of religious liberty, residing in different parts of the united empire, was held at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. In their first resolution they said, that “ they believed there were at least two millions of Protestant Dissenters in the kingdom of England and Wales, including persons of opulent fortunes, high literary attainments, and active benevolence ; that their exertions have contributed to promote industry, knowledge, good morals, social order, and public prosperity. That they are not inferior to any of their fellow subjects, in fervent love to their country, nor in ardent loyalty to their venerable sovereign, whose early promise to preserve the toleration inviolable has made an

1811.]

Petitions against Lord Sidmouth's Bill.

indelible impression on their hearts; and that any measures which might excite their discontent, and enfeeble their attachment would, therefore, at any time, and especially at this period, "be inconsistent with the national interest, and with wise and liberal policy." The resolutions amounted to eight, and are remarkably strong and judicious. The printing of the resolution of these bodies of Dissenters, and of this public meeting in all the principal newspapers, must have produced a most powerful effect on the public mind.

As Lord Sidmouth had fixed on Friday, the 17th of May, for the second reading of the bill, the time was employed by the Dissenters in obtaining petitions against the obnoxious measure. His lordship afterwards postponed its discussion till Tuesday the 21st.

Though the details of the bill were not known beyond the environs of the metropolis, yet a vast number of congregational petitions were poured in from all denominations of Dissenters: these were committed to the care of such peers as were known to be hostile to the bill.

The societies belonging to the large body of Wesleyan Methodists were remarkably active and useful in procuring petitions against the bill. Lord Erskine had to present from them alone 250 petitions; and had not the bill been so soon rejected, hundreds more would have been obtained by them.

The writer was in the House of Lords on the 21st, when the bill was lost, and well recollects how delighted the opposing peers looked, as they brought in the petitions by loads, as many as they could carry in their arms, and laid them on the benches and floor of the house. Such a scene had never till then been witnessed, since the right of the subject to petition the legislature had been settled by the Acts of "Magna Charta," and the "Bill of Rights."

The number of petitions received on this ever-to-be-remembered evening amounted to above 700. The Earl of Stanhope said, when he presented one of these, "It is signed by upwards of 2000 persons, and I have no doubt, if the bill be persisted in the petitioners against it, instead of thousands, must be counted by millions."

Lord Sidmouth's Bill rejected.

[1811.]

It was exceedingly gratifying to hear Lord Liverpool, in the name of the government, express his wish that Lord Sidmouth would withdraw his bill. His lordship observed, "The toleration laws, he was ready to say, were matters on which he thought the legislature should not touch, unless it were from causes of great paramount necessity."*

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sutton, behaved exceedingly well on this occasion, declaring his utter abhorrence of every species of persecution. "Whilst he lamented the errors, as he thought them, of the Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England, he admitted that they had a full right to the sober and conscientious profession of their own religious opinions. The sacred writings were allowed by all Protestants to be the great standard of religious doctrine; but the interpretation of them was liable to error. Uniformity of religious belief was not to be expected, so variously constituted were the minds of men; and consequently religious coercion was not only absurd and impolitic, but for all good purposes impracticable." He concluded by wishing that Lord Sidmouth would withdraw the bill, and put an end to the alarm which had been excited, even though it might be groundless.

On the motion being put about twelve o'clock at night by the Lord Chancellor, "That the bill be read again this day six months;" it was carried without a division; and consequently the bill was lost. May its hateful, sophisticating, persecuting spirit never be revived!

The noble peers, by whose speeches this noble achievement for the cause of religious liberty was effected, were Earls Grey, Stanhope, Lauderdale, Rosslyn; Lords Holland, and Erskine; and the Marquis of Lansdowne.

This last mentioned nobleman, on presenting a petition, said it was from a number of persons who had met in London, consisting

* A gentleman, who was standing near the writer at the time when Lord Liverpool sat down, said, "There is an end of the bill." I asked, "Is that quite certain?" He replied, "Did you not understand Lord Liverpool's speech?" I said, "Do you not see the number of *bishops* present, and will not all of them vote with Lord Sidmouth?" He answered very laconically, "Perhaps they would, if there were no *archbishops*." *archbishops*.

1812.]

Lord Stanhope's Bill rejected.

of 960, many of whom, including the chairman, his lordship stated, were members of the church of England, and some of them beneficed clergymen, who felt the importance of preventing those dissensions, to which this measure, if persisted in, must unhappily give rise, and who were anxious to live in peace and harmony with their fellow subjects, the Dissenters.

In June, 1812, Lord Stanhope brought in a very different bill to the House of Lords, which was read the first time, the 2nd of June, and printed for the consideration of their lordships. This was entitled "An Act, to relieve members of the church of England, and others, from sundry penalties and disabilities." The preamble contains some admirable principles, viz. "Whereas liberty is an unalienable right of all mankind, and which ought ever to be held most sacred; and whereas a man can only enjoy a thing lawfully, when no man lawfully can hinder his enjoying it, be it therefore enacted," &c. This bill was designed to prevent Dissenters from being liable to prosecution, and to entitle them to exemption from serving on juries, or in the regular or local militias, &c.

His lordship's motion, on Friday the 5th, for the second reading was rejected; but the following protest, was signed by four of the peers who had supported the measure.

"Because the toleration hitherto granted to Dissenters by law is incomplete, amounting to nothing more than a partial and conditional exemption from penalties and persecutions; whereas the bill now rejected, by recognizing the right of private judgment in matters of conscience, would have placed religious liberty on its only true and legitimate basis. Norfolk, Lansdowne, Vassal Holland, Stanhope."

It was soon found that those who wished to abridge the liberties of the Protestant Dissenters, though defeated, were not entirely conquered. The spirit of persecution, in several places, shewed its hydra form, and especially by some magistrates putting new and forced constructions upon the Toleration Act.

In Berkshire a pious farmer, named Kent, was prosecuted under the Conventicle Act, and convicted at the Reading assizes, for holding a prayer meeting in his house, and for his

having prayed publicly ; this was construed to be preaching, within the intention of the act, and he was fined accordingly. It has been truly said, that “ the enemies of religious liberty exerted themselves to effect that without law which they failed to accomplish by it.” Violent outrages at this time were committed upon peaceful, religious persons, in various parts of the kingdom, and their lives threatened and endangered. Several cases, in reference to the decisions of country magistrates, were brought before the Court of King’s Bench, and the decisions of the judges, contrary to former interpretations of the Toleration Act, confirmed those of the country magistrates. It was now found by Dissenters that this Act, their Magna Charta, no longer afforded them protection. An universal interest was excited, and the minds of pious people, Dissenters, Methodists, and those of the Established Church, were greatly agitated, from an apprehension that a period of religious persecution had commenced, and that not only fines, but imprisonment, would again be the lot of those who were “ the quiet in the land.”

Such were the circumstances which led all classes of Dissenters to unite in desiring his Majesty’s government to undertake to procure them relief ; and to their perpetual honour be it recorded that, with the most prompt and respectful attention, they complied with their request. On the 23rd of July, 1812, the royal assent was given to “ An Act to repeal certain Acts, relating to religious worship and assemblies, and persons teaching and preaching therein.” This is generally known by the name of the “ New Toleration Act.”

Thus, by a most remarkable interference of Divine Providence on behalf of the Protestant Dissenters, they were not only protected in the exercise of the rights of conscience, but their burdens were lightened, and their liberty enlarged. So true was it in this instance also, “ God made the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he restrained.” The New Toleration Act will stand as a monument of the kind and liberal feelings of his Majesty’s ministers, and of our present patriotic monarch, at that time Prince Regent, exciting the gratitude and admiration of all succeeding generations of Protestant Dissenters and Methodists.

1812.]

Mill-hill Grammar School.

By this measure the hateful "Conventicle," and "Five Mile" Acts, which for a century and a half had degraded the statute book were repealed, and some new and special privileges were granted to Protestant Dissenters. The New Toleration Act was prepared by the Wesleyan Methodists, and was obtained chiefly by their influence with his Majesty's ministers.

In this arduous struggle, the Baptists took their part; and were treated with proper respect by the other denominations. The writer is acquainted with but few instances since he has resided in London (about twenty-four years) when a different spirit has been manifested. One of these was when the proposal was made to establish a public grammar-school, at Mill-hill, to be called "The Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School." Considerable opposition to the Baptists was shewn on that occasion by an aged independent minister who is still living. A gentleman who attended the meetings says, in a note to the writer, "It was proposed, and strenuously supported, to have no connexion with the Baptists, unless they would consent to have their children instructed, in common with others, in a form of words which they deem unscriptural; or at least, unless they would submit to have their children placed in a corner, whilst others repeated such a form of words, as was contended by congregational high authority, to be too important either to be modified or omitted; and, for relief from this grievance, they were indebted to the good sense and correct feeling of their *lay*, rather than their *clerical* friends: to which, however, there were some honourable exceptions."

To meet this difficulty, the question referred to in the Assembly's Catechism had another answer provided for the use of the Baptist boys. It is presumed, however, that the question on baptism, in the practice of the school, was wholly omitted; at least, the Rev. Mr. Phillips, the principal master, informed the writer that such was his practice; and it is not likely the second master, who was a Baptist, would use it.—The "Congregational School for the sons of poor Dissenting Ministers," established soon after by the late Rev. John Townsend, excluded entirely the sons of Baptists.

The year 1809 was commenced by the publication of

"The Baptist Magazine." It had been long felt to be desirable that the denomination should have a periodical work devoted to its use. This work had the following mottoes: "Whatever is designed to fit every thing will fit nothing well." *Dr. Johnson*. "Names are intended to distinguish things."—"Our work is called the Baptist Magazine, because it is intended to be a Repository for the Baptists' use." This periodical was originated in the West of England by a few gentlemen who were, in consequence of advancing a given sum, proprietors. The profits were to be devoted to the assistance of widows of Baptist ministers. Being printed at Tiverton, and from other untoward circumstances, the work was prevented from succeeding to the wish of the friends of the denomination; and therefore, in the year 1813, it was removed to London, and placed under the direction of several ministers resident in town, as a committee of editors; and a "New Series" was commenced.

Up to this period, several of the principal of the Baptist ministers residing in the country, had been connected with the *Evangelical Magazine*; but an event which took place in 1812 led to a separation. The conductors had published in that work a statement respecting the Baptist churches, which was illiberal and untrue.* The Baptist managers complained, and offered to disprove the statement; the Pædobaptist managers refused to retract the assertion, and intimated their conviction that it was correct; this led to a final separation, and the Baptist ministers were awarded a proportion of the accumulated fund, amounting to about £83, towards a new fund for their Baptist widows. The ministers referred to, Messrs. Fuller, Ryland, and Hinton, now united with their own brethren in contributing to the Baptist Magazine.

As it may appear that the Baptist ministers manifested a want of forbearance, by separating themselves from the *Evangelical Magazine*, it is thought proper to make an extract from a paper written at the time by Mr. Fuller. It is part of a review of

* This was an assertion of the Rev. Dr. Haweis, who had said, "The Baptist churches have been considerably increased, not so much probably by conversions from the world, as by additions from the other denominations."

1814.]

Separation from the Evangelical Magazine.

Dr. Ryland's "Candid Statement," &c. in the number of the Baptist Magazine for May, 1814. "When our brethren, who were connected with the Evangelical Magazine, withdrew from it, it was not merely on account of an unfounded charge against their denomination being preferred and persisted in; but from its being intimated, by some of their colleagues, that they stood in the way of their writing with freedom on the subject of baptism in that magazine. Perceiving, therefore, that their departure was likely to be the signal for the commencement of hostilities which, whatever good they might occasion, would also produce much evil, it was accompanied with a considerable portion of regret.

"In publishing on this subject (Baptism), Dr. Ryland has acted merely on the defensive, and evidently discovers considerable regret, in being under a kind of necessity to oppose many whom he highly esteemed.

"It is some satisfaction, however, to observe, that there appears to be no unfriendly feeling between us and the generality of Pædobaptists. So far as we can judge, we were never on better terms with evangelical episcopalians; nor with evangelical presbyterians; nor with the Independents of the North; nor with the Moravian brethren; nor with others that might be named: it is only the Independents of the South who appear to cherish a hostile spirit; and of them it is nearly confined to ministers; and among them there are not a few, and men of respectability too, who are of another mind. It is chiefly owing to the zeal of a few individuals, sufficiently designated by our author, 'making the highest pretensions to a share in the funeral of bigotry.'"

The "Preface" to the Magazine for 1814, printed in the number for December, contains the following allusions to this event: this was written also by Mr. Fuller. "At the last annual meeting of the proprietors some considerable alteration was made in the editing department of the work, which it is hoped will tend to its further improvement, and obtain for it an increased share of the public confidence and support of the religious public.

"When some of our brethren withdrew from the Evangelical Magazine, they were given to expect that the separation would be the signal for hostilities on the subject of baptism. This

Stepney Academical Institution.

[1810.]

year their expectations have been fulfilled. Nothing, however, like a fair examination of the subject, or in the least degree respectable, has yet appeared. Two or three reviews have been written in a style and spirit sufficiently characteristic of the writers; a few small pieces have been reprinted, which have been long ago answered, and the story of the *Men of Munster* has been revived, headed by a title manifestly calculated to defame.* Some notice has been taken of these pieces in our magazine; but we have no inclination to keep up this bush-fighting kind of warfare. Two of our brethren have defended our principles in a frank and candid manner:† let their arguments be fairly met, and we shall have no apprehensions for the consequences. But if instead of this, we are to be answered by what is manifestly untrue, that no Baptist community existed till the sixteenth century, and then accounting for it, by roundly asserting that our system has not for its support so much as one text, precedent, or example, in all the word of God; we should be obliged to our opponents to allow the subject to go to rest. In this request we are pretty well satisfied the greatest and most respectable part of the Pædobaptists will cordially unite with us."

"The London Baptist Education Society" was, in January 1810, merged in a new institution, designated "The Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney." This design was announced in the Baptist Magazine for April, 1810, as follows:

"Many friends of the Baptist Denomination in London and its vicinity, have long been desirous of establishing an academy, in or near the metropolis, for the education of pious young men, who may be recommended by the churches, as possessing promising gifts for the christian ministry.

"The instruction of such persons in solid and useful learning,

* History of the Baptists, by William Robertson, D. D. This was an extract from Robertson's History, in reference to the Madmen of Munster. Reprinted by the Rev. Dr. Cracknell, then of Weymouth.

† One of these was a Candid Statement of the reasons which induce Baptists to differ in opinion and practice from many of their Christian brethren, by John Ryland, D. D. The other was probably a small tract by Dr. Olinthus Gregory, Mathematical Professor at Woolwich.

1810.]

Liberality of Mr. William Taylor.

especially at the present period, when education so generally prevails, appears a most desirable object.

“The Promoters of the undertaking are not actuated by motives of opposition to institutions already established for similar purposes, but cheerfully acknowledge their obligations to them, and cordially wish them success; yet, they apprehend, there is abundant room for additional efforts in so important a cause, and that the establishment of such an institution in the neighbourhood of London, will be attended with many obvious and important advantages.

“They are also happy in having it in their power to add, that through the munificence of an aged, and highly respectable friend, suitable freehold premises have been purchased for the above purpose. The foundation is thus laid, but the superstructure is to be reared; and it is confidently hoped, that, in support of a design, which, under a divine blessing, may become extensively useful in spreading the knowledge of Christ, and in promoting the best interests of mankind, Christian liberality will not be wanting. It is expected that, in the ensuing summer, the academy will be opened for the reception and accommodation of students.”

The gentleman alluded to, who had thus munificently founded and endowed this institution, was Mr. William Taylor, a hosier, living in Newgate Street. He was a member, and deacon of the church in Prescott Street, and the last person who was baptized by the Rev. Samuel Wilson. He appropriated in his life time upwards of £6000 to this object, and left an additional sum by his will.

On Thursday, the 24th of May, the annual meeting of the London Baptist Education Society was held at the meeting house in Dean Street, the day of the monthly meeting, when the Rev. William Newman, of Bow, preached a sermon which was afterwards published, entitled, “The Qualifications and Work of the Christian Pastor.” After public worship, the society confirmed the resolution of two general meetings which had been held in January, by which the constitution of the society was changed and enlarged. The Rev. Andrew Fuller, who had concluded the public services by prayer, was so well satisfied with the qualifi-

cations of Mr. Newman for filling the office of president and theological tutor to the new institution, that he remarked to the treasurer, Joseph Gutteridge, Esq. "You need not look abroad any longer for a suitable tutor, when you have one so near home."

The Committee soon after chose Mr. Newman, the pastor of the church at Bow, to fill the president's office in the new academy, and he in the most ingenuous and disinterested manner gave up a profitable and respectable private academy to accept the invitation. In the Baptist Magazine for April 1812, there is an account from the Committee, signed Feb. 4, in which they say, "The number of Students now on the books of the institution is seventeen; viz. six at the academy house under the care of the Rev. William Newman; and eleven under the care of different ministers in the country, corresponding with the original design of the Education Society." They add, in reference to the original institution, "This part of their plan they consider so well adapted to the circumstances of the denomination, being calculated to afford assistance to many godly persons called by our churches to the exercise of their gifts, who must otherwise remain extremely illiterate; that, notwithstanding the pressure upon their funds, they have not lost sight of it; but have been constantly increasing the number of students, who are now maintained at an expense nearly treble the amount of the subscription hitherto raised for that specific purpose. Twelve young men, who have been under the care of this society, are now settled with churches in the country, and their labours have been attended with success."

The Baptists had long felt the want of an annual meeting in London, or elsewhere, for promoting the various objects belonging to the denomination. This was first proposed in June 1811, through the Baptist Magazine, by the writer of this history. The paper was entitled "Union essential to Prosperity." Speaking of the Baptist Missionary Society it is said—"That a very considerable degree of unanimity prevails in our denomination on this subject is cheerfully admitted, and it is a cause for much gratitude to the God of peace. But it is asked, whether every

1812.] *Suggestion respecting Annual Meetings adopted.*

mean has been adopted which is likely to increase and perpetuate it? Have all the benefits been obtained from this circumstance which it is calculated to produce? Does not the constitution of our churches, which prevents all external interference, and therefore preserves them independent of each other, require some general bond of union? And in order to this, some mode of general association, the plan that has often been talked about, is now submitted, through the medium of this magazine, to all the members of our churches, and particularly to the ministers and messengers of our annual association, viz. 'That an annual assembly be held, either in London, or at some of the larger and most central towns in the country, composed of the ministers and messengers from the neighbouring churches, and of two deputies from every association in the United Kingdom.' If at this meeting a report was to be made of the state of the mission in India, and collections made after the sermons for its support, one valuable end would be answered; a spirit of zeal and benevolence would be thus diffused through all our churches. In addition to this, an account of the itinerant labours in our own country, through the medium of the secretary of the Baptist Itinerant Society in London may be made, and thus a spirit of emulation to visit our dark and benighted villages may be excited," &c. It concluded by proposing, "that a General Assembly may be convened to assemble in the summer of 1812."

These suggestions were not lost on the leading persons of the denomination, and the wishes and anticipations of the writer were more than realized. The number of the Baptist Magazine for June 1812 contains the following notices, under the head *Baptist Mission and Union*. "Since the meeting for the benefit of the above mission was announced to take place on the 24th of June, it has been thought necessary to procure a larger place of worship. It had been fixed at Elim Chapel, Fetter Lane. The Dutch church, Austin Friars, has been kindly granted for that purpose; Mr. Fuller, the secretary, will make a report of the state of the mission after each sermon. The services will commence at eleven in the forenoon and six in the evening. The next morning, at eight o'clock precisely, a meeting will be held at Dr. Rippon's meeting-house, Carter Lane, to take into consideration the pro-

posed measure for an annual general association of the Particular Baptist Churches."

In the course of the year, the writer of the former paper had mentioned the proposed meeting to the Rev. Mr. Fuller, who received the proposition very coldly, saying, "You will only shew the poverty of the denomination by such a meeting." He added "I will, however, consult brother Sutcliff about it, and will let you know our opinion on the subject." It is scarcely necessary to add that those worthy but cautious ministers afterwards came heartily and fully into the proposed measure.*

At the meetings for the Baptist mission, held at the Dutch church, Mr. Fuller and Dr. Ryland preached to a very numerous assembly of persons from all the Baptist congregations in London, and from many places in the country. There were collected at the different meetings £320, a sum almost equal to what at any former period had been contributed any year in the metropolis.†

From a manuscript of Mr. Fuller I copy the following substance of the report read at the Dutch church: "Upwards of sixty had been baptized at Calcutta within Jan. 1, and Dec. 10, 1811, and about thirty in other churches. Several more were expected before the close of the year. At the end of Nov. 1808, whither the list in the 'Brief Narrative' brings us, the number of the baptized was 147. Since that time the increase has been as follows. In 1809 baptized eighty; in 1810, one hundred and five; in 1811 about ninety-seven. Present number four hundred and twenty-nine."

On the Thursday morning the proposed general meeting was held at Carter Lane; the Rev. Dr. Rippon, pastor of the

* The following extract from a letter addressed by Mr. Fuller to the writer, dated July 2, 1812, will explain this allusion:—"I thank you for your diligence in increasing the subscriptions. Go on, only let it be gently, without pressing any one, without puffing or boasting, which are such common things in London, that Londoners are in danger of doing them without being conscious of it!"

† There had been a collection made for several preceding years at one or other of the Baptist meeting-houses, by the minister who came to London to receive the annual subscriptions for the mission.

1812.]

General Union.

church in that place, was called to the chair. The reader will judge from the following list of the names of pastors, who united in the design, that it was taken up with spirit and affection. They are printed according to the alphabetical list of the counties in which they resided :—

BERKSHIRE.

Abingdon.	John Evans.
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BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Olney.	John Sutcliff.
Goldhill.	Daniel Dorsatt.
Chenies.	William Lewis.
Chesham.	William Tomlin.
Luton.	Ebenezer Daniel.

CORNWALL.

Penzance.	George C. Smith.
Falmouth.	Thomas Griffin.

DEVONSHIRE.

Tiverton.	Thomas Smith.
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ESSEX.

Harlow.	John Brain.
Saffron-Walden.	Josiah Wilkinson.
Rayleigh.	James Pilkington.
Langham.	Zenas Trivett.
Potter's Bar.	Samuel Bligh.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Tewkesbury.	Daniel Trotman.
Horsley.	William Winterbotham.
Broadmead, Bristol.	John Ryland.
Pithay.	Thomas Roberts.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

St. Albans.	John Carter.
Hertford.	William James.

HAMPSHIRE.

Forton, near Gosport.	Thomas Tilly.
Lymington.	William Giles.
Romsey.	William Yarnold
Swannick, n ^r Southampton.	James Chapman.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

Hail Weston.	James Farley.
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KENT.

Chatham.	John Knott.
Lessness Heath, n ^r Woolwich.	William Coleman.
Woolwich.	William Culver.
Crayford.	John Rowe.
Seven-Oaks.	Thomas Shirley.
Bessels-Green.	John Stanger.
Eyethorn.	John Giles.
Eynsford.	John Rogers.
Margate.	George Atkinson.
Ryegate.	Reynold Hogg.

MIDDLESEX.**LONDON.**

Devonshire Square.	Timothy Thomas.
	Thomas Thomas.
Eagle Street.	Joseph Ivimey.
Alie Street.	William Shenstone.
Fetter Lane.	Abraham Austin.
Wild Street.	Thomas Waters.
Bow.	William Newman.
Hackney	Francis Augustus Cox.

SOUTHWARK.

Church Street.	James Upton.
Carter Lane.	John Rippon. D. D.
Dean Street.	William Button.
Harlington.	Edward Torlin.
Staines.	Thomas Silvester.
Hammersmith.	Tho. Uppadine.

NORFOLK.

Norwich.	Mark Wilks.
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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Kettering.	Andrew Fuller.
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OXFORDSHIRE.

Oxford.	James Hinton.
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1812.]

*Resolutions of General Union.***SOMERSETSHIRE.**

Frome.	Samuel Saunders.
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SUSSEX.

Lewes.	Moses Fisher.
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SUFFOLK.

Walton.	Abraham Cowell.
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SHROPSHIRE.

Shrewsbury.	John Palmer.
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WILTSHIRE.

Salisbury.	John Saffery.
Westbury Leigh.	Geo. Phillips.
Melksham.	Thomas Ward.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

Worcester.	William Belsher.
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The following resolutions were adopted with great unanimity :—

I. Resolved that a more general union of the Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptist churches in the United Kingdom is very desirable.

II. Resolved that an annual meeting be held in London, or elsewhere, on the last Wednesday and Thursday in June.

III. Resolved that the first meeting be held in London, (by divine permission,) on the 25th and 26th of June 1813, when two sermons shall be preached, and collections made in aid of the mission.

IV. Resolved that a respectful invitation be given to our churches and associations, in the country, to appoint messengers to meet their brethren in London at that time.

V. Resolved, that the objects of this association be the promotion of the cause of Christ in general ; and the interests of the denomination in particular ; with a primary view to the encouragement and support of the Baptist mission.

VI. That the associated ministers in London be a committee for the present year, to manage the concerns of the association ; and that all communications relative thereto be addressed (free

Twentieth Anniversary of the Baptist Missionary Society [1812].

of expense) to their secretaries, the Rev. Mr. Button, No. 24, Paternoster Row, and the Rev. Mr. Ivimey, No. 56, Red Lion Street, Holborn.

VII. Resolved that the brethren Sutcliff and Hall be requested to preach the sermons next year; and in case of failure, brethren Hinton and Steadman.

VIII. Resolved that the thanks of this meeting be respectfully presented to the elders of the Dutch church, for their friendly attention in lending us their place of worship.

IX. Resolved that brethren Fuller and Ryland be requested to print their sermons for the use of the mission.

After the business was concluded, a public prayer-meeting was held in the meeting-house, when the Rev. Mr. Hinton of Oxford began by prayer, and delivered a very animated, impressive, and appropriate address on the Nature and Advantage of Christian Union. The Rev. Mr. Stanger, of Bessels Green, Kent, prayed, and Dr. Rippon gave out the following verses and concluded—

“Lord if we meet on earth no more,
O may we meet on Canaan’s shore!
Leave guilt, and death, and sin behind,
And every bliss in glory find.

But if we longer here remain,
And ever meet on earth again,
May every heart inflamed with love
Be fitter for thy courts above.”

The Baptist Missionary Society, held a general meeting at Kettering, September 29, 1812, at which the names of nineteen persons were added to the original members of the committee;* and a letter was adopted, written by the venerable secretary to the churches in the East Indies. This letter fully explains the principles, and breathes the spirit which at that time prevailed in the society.

* The resolutions adopted on this occasion, with the names added to the committee, may be seen in No. XXIII. of the Periodical Accounts, and also in the Baptist Magazine for Feb. 1813.

1812.]

held at Kettering.

From the Baptist Missionary Society, met at Kettering, September 29, 1812, to the Missionaries and Churches in the East.

“Dearly beloved brethren,

“Being assembled as a Society, on the twentieth anniversary from our first formation, we address ourselves to you in a brotherly epistle. We cannot review these twenty years without blessing God for what we have seen and heard. We bless his name that so many of your and our lives have been thus long spared and rendered subservient, in some good degree, to the extending of his glorious kingdom in the earth.

“Considering that several of us are drawing towards the period of our labours, we have, at this meeting, taken measures which we hope may, with the divine blessing, provide for futurity. The seat of the Society will, it is hoped, continue in the association where it originated, and where we trust it will be conducted in the same quiet and harmonious way which it has hitherto been; but we have agreed to enlarge the committee by adding to it some of our brethren from different parts of the kingdom, who appear best suited for the work, and to have had their hearts most interested in it. Their names you will see in the resolutions. Many of these brethren cannot, for local reasons, ordinarily assemble with us for consultation; but they can receive and communicate intelligence, and promote the object in their several connexions. It is for this reason that in the present addition our choice has principally fallen on ministers, and ministers of the middle age, whose activity and prudence may serve to promote the object, and when such of us, as have hitherto conducted the business of the mission, shall be removed or laid aside, some of them will, we trust, be able and willing to take our places.

“It is an encouragement to us that there is manifestly an increasing interest in the work. We have not had occasion to urge nor scarcely to entreat the religious public for contributions; but, as in the case of the Macedonian churches, the entreaty has, in many instances, been on the other side. Besides the churches from which the parent Society was formed, you know the willingness of our brethren in Warwickshire, Wiltshire,

Yorkshire, Somersetshire, and other places, who at an early period entered into our views, and communicated freely of their substance. You know of the annual subscriptions in the metropolis, which, with collections, donations, &c. have gradually increased to upwards of thirteen hundred pounds—you know of the collections at Norwich, Cambridge, Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Plymouth and Dock, Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Scarborough, Newcastle, Alnwick, Berwick upon Tweed, and other places—you know of the unexampled exertions of Scotland, of some liberal contributions that have been received from Ireland, and of the almost unsolicited kindness of the churches in North America. To this we can now add, that some of our churches in the Eastern, Southern, and Western counties of England, appear to feel an increasing interest in the work; liberal collections have been made at Manchester, Leeds, Sunderland, North and South Shields, and in various parts of the principality of Wales; Auxiliary Societies are formed and forming in London and its vicinity, in Norwich, in Cambridge, in Portsmouth, in Plymouth, in Bristol, in Birmingham, in Liverpool, in Glasgow, in Edinburgh, and in places less distinguished by their population. When the late disastrous intelligence reached us (about three weeks ago), a strong sensation was felt throughout the kingdom; not only in our own denomination, but amongst Christians of every name, each vying with the other to repair the loss. Great, it is true, have been the difficulties of the country in respect of commerce, yet, amidst them all, the contributions of Christians have increased beyond all former examples. In the past year we had, as you know, great pecuniary difficulties; but our wants have been generously supplied, and our hands strengthened. In respect of the recent calamity, we doubt not but the loss will be amply repaired.

“ But, passing over our own affairs, permit us to say a few things relative to yours. Beloved brethren, it is in our hearts to live and die with you! We are aware of your exposedness to temptations, and of your being the subjects of indwelling sin. On some occasions, considering the conspicuous situation you occupy, we tremble for you; on others we bless God who hath hitherto preserved you. The late serious calamity seemed light to us in

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Letter of the Committee.

comparison of what it would have been had it affected your lives or characters! Truly we rejoice over you. How should we do otherwise, when God is manifestly with you? Go on, beloved brethren, let neither the oppositions of open enemies, nor the intrigues of professed friends divert you from your object.

“It must afford great satisfaction to you, who have borne the heat and burden of the day, as well as to us, to see young men rising up amongst you, who are now co-workers with you, and some of whom may be your successors in the work. You can hardly conceive how intimately we are acquainted not only with you, who went out from us, and with your female companions, but with your younger Careys, your invaluable Fernandez, your Aratoons, and Peters, and Leonards, and Forders, and Peacocks, and Kreeshnoos, and Sebuk-rams, and Kangalees. Our thoughts rove with delight from station to station. We seem to be present with you in all your domestic circles, rising seminaries, and religious assemblies; at Serampore or Calcutta, in the villages of Jessore, at Rangoon, at Goamalty, at Dinapore or Sadamahl, at Balasore or Cuttack, at Cutwa or Lakrakoonda, at Patna or Agra; we rejoice in your little groups of Christian soldiers, in your modest, but zealous, native preachers, and in all your fellow-helpers through the country; to each and all we say, from the fulness of our hearts, ‘Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ!’

“With a few words to the churches, which God has graciously given you and us, as the reward of our united labours, we will conclude our present epistle.

“Very dear brethren! You did not think, till of late, that the religion of Jesus Christ was so interesting; that it not only makes known salvation, but unites the saved in bonds of tender affection. You now perceive that it is a religion adapted for the whole world, and which, if truly embraced, would heal it of all its maladies; you feel that men of divers nations, and languages, and casts, and complexions, and manners, are one in Christ Jesus. So we feel to you, and you to us. It was the hope of your salvation, founded on the numerous prophecies in the Holy Scriptures, that twenty years ago, induced us to send our beloved Carey and Thomas, men whom, if we had felt only for

ourselves, we could ill have spared; but your salvation outweighed all other considerations. It was this induced them, and after them your Wards, and Marshmans, and Chamberlains, and others of their fellow labourers, and female companions, to quit their native shores, and all that was dear to them on earth; to cast in their lot with you, and this while you were yet enemies of God by wicked works. We rejoice that God has blessed them, and made them blessings to many of you. If you continue grounded and established in the faith, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by a becoming conversation, this shall be our reward.

“Remember, dear brethren, that the unbelieving world, whether Hindoos, Mussulmans, or Europeans, will hate you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you; only let it be falsely, and for Christ’s name sake, and great will be your reward in heaven. It is one mighty evidence that Christianity is of God, that it produces the same effects in believers, and kindles the same dislike in unbelievers, as it did eighteen centuries ago. It has afforded us much pleasure to read the accounts of the patience and firmness of the brethren when persecuted for Christ’s sake, in Jessore, and in Bheerboom. Be of good courage; ‘ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.’ Be faithful unto death, and you will receive a crown of life! Know also that your greatest danger does not arise from the persecutions of the wicked, but from things in and among yourselves. ‘Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God.’ It is a serious thing to profess to be a Christian. If, after this, we turn away from the truth, we plunge into double destruction. Read, and well consider the warning language of the apostle Peter: ‘For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.’ You must lay your accounts with some such characters from amongst you, men of corrupt minds, who will endeavour to draw away disciples after them. Take heed not only that you

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are not the persons, but that you be not drawn away by those who are. Cleave with purpose of heart unto the Lord. Make the Holy Scriptures the men of your counsel. Our brethren, the missionaries, will teach you the good and the right way; but neither they nor we wish to be considered as your oracles. 'Esteem them highly in love for their work's sake;' but follow them no farther than they follow Christ. Consider nothing as oracles but the Scriptures. From them learn the truth in meekness, and regulate your lives. Let your minds be baptized in the sentiments which they teach. They are 'able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Let the doctrine of Christ crucified be your meat and drink; this will preserve you from fatal errors. That doctrine which would lead you to entertain low thoughts of God, high thoughts of yourselves, light thoughts of sin, or mean thoughts of Christ, is not from above, but from beneath.

"The door at which Satan has commonly entered into the churches, so as to corrupt their doctrine, worship, discipline, or practice, and thereby to effect their ruin, has been a spirit of vain speculation, and idle dispute. Hence the apostle charges his son Timothy, saying, 'Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.' Reckon those questions unlearned which are foreign from the Scriptures.

"Beware of corrupting the simplicity of Christian worship by mixing it with any of your old superstitions. It was thus that Christianity was corrupted by the Roman Catholics, and reduced to a species of idolatry. Mix none of your own devices with the worship of God. God is jealous of his honour, and will accept only a pure offering.

"Study the things that make for peace. Love as brethren: be pitiful, be courteous. Bear and forbear, and forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake forgiveth you. Beware of high-mindedness; cultivate the spirit of a little child. Think of the exhortation of the apostle, and of the amazing example which he sets before us: 'Let that mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not usurpation to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the like-

ness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' In a few words, be peaceable subjects, kind masters, faithful servants, tender parents, obedient children, just in your dealings, chaste in your intercourse, exemplary in your families, and holy in all manner of conversation. 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' Grace be with you. - Amen.

"Signed by the Members of the Society."

The year 1813 was a most memorable period in regard to the Missions in the East Indies. The charter of the East India Company was to be renewed. On Tuesday, the 22nd of March, the resolutions on which this was to be founded, were introduced by Lord Castlereagh in the House of Commons. One of these provided for the establishment of a bishoprick, and three arch-deaconaries in India ; but no intimation was given by his lordship that Christian missionaries of other denominations would be relieved from the powers of exclusion and banishment possessed by the East India Company. It was not wonderful, therefore, that the conductors of the Baptist Missionary Society should be filled with alarm ; especially when the President of the Board of Control, Lord Buckinghamshire, who was visited by some of them just after, gave them no encouragement to expect any assistance from his Majesty's government. Mr. Fuller told his lordship that "the wish of the Baptist Society was, that they might obtain, by a legal enactment the protection of the Society's British property, and liberty to send out our missionaries in the Company's ships." In reply to some difficulties started by his lordship, Mr. Fuller said, "We had hoped, my lord, his Majesty's government would have assisted us, but if they refuse to do so we must petition Parliament on the subject ; and there are thousands who will sign our petitions." Turning indignantly upon Mr. Fuller, Lord Buckinghamshire replied, "If you will you must, and those who will sign your petition know nothing at all of the subject." "Not so, my lord," said Mr. Sutcliff, "they will be persons who have been reading on the subject for twenty years." Another of the deputation informed his lordship, that "Dr. Marshman had stated that every

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Public Meetings.

baptized Hindoo became a friend at heart to the British Government, being convinced of the benefit communicated by Britain to India :” To this he seemed to listen with approbation.

A public meeting, convened chiefly by members of the Church of England, was held at the City of London Tavern on the 29th day of March. The Right Honourable Lord Gambier in the chair.

In the Baptist Magazine for April, I find a report of this meeting, in which, after reciting the manner in which Lord Castlereagh had introduced the business of the new charter to the attention of the House of Commons, it is said,—“ We therefore apprehend it may become necessary for all the friends to religious freedom and to the unrestricted promulgation of Christianity among the ignorant and idolatrous inhabitants of Asia, to unite in convening local meetings, and in presenting petitions to Parliament for relief.”—“ In the mean time,” the editors observe, “ we refer with pleasure to the appropriate and impressive resolutions of the committee of “ the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty,” which are inserted on the cover of the Magazine, and invite the attention of every benevolent and pious reader to a subject now very important, and on which the evangelization of fifty millions, and of their posterity may depend.

The Baptist Magazine for May makes the following statement, under the head of “ Christianity in India :”—

“ The extent of the British empire in India ; the gross idolatry of fifty millions of British subjects in that country ; the sanguinary rites, murders, and atrocities openly practised there under the sanction of religion ; the great success that has attended the labours of a few Baptist missionaries at Serampore, and the wide field of usefulness opened through those labours to the exertions of other missionaries ; together with the long recorded resolution of the House of Commons, made so long since as 1793, but not yet acted upon : all these, added to the light that has been thrown upon the Hindoo character and religion, within these few years, had produced a general feeling in the public mind, that some liberal measures should be adopted for the gradual, religious, and moral improvement of the inhabitants of

Baptists in London call a Meeting.

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British India. It seemed to be a circumstance favourable to the wishes of all the friends of human happiness, that the renewal of the East India Company's charter would afford an opportunity for the removal of the almost inseparable bar which has hitherto prevented the entrance of Christian instructors from this country into our Indian dominions; and a hope was entertained that the Government would be disposed to protect the propagation of Christianity in India by peaceable and prudent missionaries of any denomination.

"We hinted in our last at the disappointment felt by the religious public, when Lord Castlereagh brought forward his plan. One of the resolutions specifying the appointment of a bishop and three archdeacons, for the British dominions in India; and his lordship stating, that in all other respects the subject of religion should be left as it now stands, the Court of Directors retaining the sole power of granting licenses to persons going thither for religious purposes, it was not to be expected that any one, acquainted with the state of India, and with the general system of the Court of Directors, who have hitherto almost uniformly shut the door against every one who wished to be instrumental in communicating Christian light to its inhabitants, could be satisfied with such an arrangement. No sooner was this plan divulged than a general movement commenced in every religious circle in the empire. The organ of the pious part of the establishment* expressed a hope that the first meeting called in London on account of this business 'would only be the signal for similar meetings in every city, town, and even village, in the United Kingdom.'"

At a meeting of the Society of Baptist ministers held at the Jamaica Coffee House, Cornhill, March 29, 1813: it was resolved, "That it appeared to be desirable that a meeting of the supporters and friends to the Baptist Missionary Society in London, be held on account of the new East India Company's charter. A requisition was accordingly issued, appointing such meeting on the 4th of April; but this was afterwards postponed to Tuesday the 6th instant.

* The Christian Observer.

Address to the Churches.

A preparatory meeting of a few friends was called, to be held at Mr. Burls's, 56, Lothbury, on Monday morning, the 5th instant, at ten o'clock. At this meeting the Resolutions and Petition were discussed and adopted: a committee was nominated, and the business finally arranged for the public meeting to be held at the New London Tavern, Cheapside, on the 6th instant, at twelve o'clock.*

" To the Congregation of Baptists, meeting at
in the County of The Committee, appointed to
carry into effect the above Resolutions, present their unfeigned
regard, and earnestly entreat your attention to the following
statement of solemn and interesting facts.

" Their religious rites are the most inhuman which can possibly

* After this meeting had been announced, the London Missionary Society appointed a public meeting to be held at the same place, on the day preceding, for the same purpose, and adopted petitions to the legislature.

be conceived. They devote their children to the crocodiles and their widows to the flames,* in numbers that would surpass belief were it not authenticated by indubitable testimony. So destitute of the feelings of humanity are these miserable beings, that the aged and the feeble are carried out by their children, and left unassisted and exposed to a lingering death.

“The obscene and wicked practices which prevail in the temple of the Hindoo idol Juggernaut, that modern Moloch, in the province of Orissa, are shocking to morality and decency, and ought not to be named in a Christian country, except to bewail them, and if possible to remove them.

“The torments which the poor Hindoos voluntarily inflict upon themselves are almost incredible. Many, suspended on a tree, swing by ropes fastened to hooks fixed in their backs! Others walk a great distance on blunted spikes driven through their sandals! Some run spikes through their tongues! And there are numerous instances of persons throwing themselves under the grating wheels of Juggernaut’s carriage, on which the idol sits mounted on a throne sixty feet in height. The immense wheels of this ponderous machine, which deeply indent the ground as it slowly passes along, annually crush great numbers of the deluded devotees of this sanguinary deity; while the crowd of spectators raise a shout of joy to their god; ‘who *smiles*’ they say, ‘when the libation of blood is made!’†

“For evils so enormous no remedy can be found, save ‘the glorious gospel of the blessed God;’—‘that tree of life the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations!’ The success of this remedy has been most efficacious. The names of Swartz and Gericke need no monuments to perpetuate their remembrance, they are engraven in the hearts of thousands of the native converts of India. Our dear brethren at Serampore and Calcutta, and in other of our Indian provinces, have also rendered emi-

* The Baptist Magazine of the same month contains an accurate and very minute account, transmitted by the missionaries to the Society, of the immolation of fifty-five widows on the funeral pile in May and June, 1812. The aggregate number of orphans thus deprived of parental protection and support amounted to 168!

† Christian Researches in Asia, by the Rev. Dr. Buchanan.

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Address to the Churches.

nent and effectual services to the cause of Christianity by their various and indefatigable labours; by the translation of the sacred Scriptures into many of the Eastern languages! by establishing extensive schools, and by spreading the glad tidings of salvation; in which they are assisted by many of the native converts. Whilst our brethren resident in India are thus honourably employed in sowing that precious seed 'which can never be lost, for grace insures the crop,'—we are anxious that more labourers may be introduced into the harvest to carry on this important work—that sinners may not only be awakened to a sense of their danger, but that those who have been brought to the knowledge and experience of divine things, may be built up on their most holy faith.

"But the friends of this mission feel the importance of the fact that all this extensive work may, under existing laws, be in a moment stopped; in which event the missionaries themselves might be ordered out of the country, and the property of the mission dissipated.

"Our present missionaries share in the confidence of Government; God has graciously given them favour in the sight of those who have the supreme authority; but without legal toleration, other governors may treat them in a very different manner. While Carey and his associates live, and a Wellesley, a Minto, or a Moira preside in India, we have ground to hope that our mission may still be protected; but another king may arise who knows not Joseph.—We are, therefore, anxious for protection founded upon the laws of England, and not upon the kind dispositions and friendly intentions, even of British governors.

"We are now obliged to send our missionaries at a great expense, and at the loss of much valuable time, by way of America; instead of this, we wish to send them direct to India, as occasion may require, in British ships. These vessels have never yet conveyed one of those benevolent persons who have carried with them the sovereign antidote to heal the fatal miseries by which superstition has poisoned nearly the whole population of India.

"The period for the renewal of the East India Charter has arrived, and we are anxious to obtain the introduction of a clause

Circular to the Ministers.

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which may afford us the protection and the liberty we desire. Deputations from the Baptist Missionary Society for this purpose have waited on Lord Liverpool, first Lord of the Treasury; and on Lord Buckinghamshire, President of the Board of Control. They were kindly received and politely treated. These objects were presented to their lordship's attention, viz. 'A legal toleration for the mission in India, and permission to send out others in British ships.' These are the only objects for which we have petitioned Parliament, and we earnestly entreat you to come forward 'with one heart, and one soul' to do likewise. Consider that you have an opportunity to contribute towards relieving the present and future miseries of countless millions of immortal beings, by making them acquainted with 'the unsearchable riches of Christ!' May you enjoy the high gratification of being able in any measure to say, 'I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.'—'The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.'

"The Committee recommend it to the pastors of all our churches, that they urge their friends to bear this important subject upon their minds in their weekly meetings of prayer, while this business is pending.

"By order of the Committee.

"WILLIAM BURLS, CHAIRMAN."

"Committee Room, New London Tavern.
London, April 7, 1813.

"Dear brother,

"In transmitting to you the preceding Resolutions, and the form of a petition to Parliament, with a statement of facts on which those Resolutions are grounded, we are directed by the Committee most earnestly to entreat that you will use your utmost efforts in forwarding, with all possible dispatch, a similar petition from 'the supporters and friends to the Baptist mission in India,' in your congregation, town, and neighbourhood; so that, if possible, the name of every person, whether housekeeper or not, may be signed to it, who wishes the mission may be protected, enlarged, and perpetuated.

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Circular to the Ministers.

“ You will particularly observe, that though you may have already signed a petition ‘ To promote Christianity in India,’* this by no means renders it improper to sign another to procure the ‘ Protection of the Baptist Mission in India.’ For this assertion we have the authority of members in Parliament, who have assured us, there will be no indecorum for the same persons to sign different petitions as the objects are materially different.

“ It may be material to state as a motive to prompt and strenuous exertion on the present occasion, that the Resolution of the Honourable House of Commons in the year 1793 (mentioned in our third Resolution), in all probability failed of being carried into a law for want of an expression of the public sentiment in its favour.

“ We entreat you, dear brother, that, on receiving this, you will immediately convene a meeting of your most active friends, and cause the petition to be fairly copied; if engrossed on parchment it will be best; but this is not material, as many petitions are presented to Parliament written on good stout paper.

“ You will be careful that no person sign his name twice to the same petition—that no female sign it—no person under sixteen years of age—no person should be permitted to make a mark—nor any one to sign for another. Let the paper be ruled with columns, and if more than one sheet be filled, let them be sewed together.

“ You had better place the petition in the vestry of your meeting-house, or perhaps some public room in the town, and take the most effectual means to make it generally known.

“ We are desirous to suggest that your petition to the House of Commons should be transmitted to one of the representatives of your town, or county, who should be earnestly entreated not only to present it, but to give it his vote and influence in Parliament.

“ With respect to your petition to the House of Lords, if you are not acquainted with any peer to whom you can with pro-

* The petition to promote Christianity in India has for its object the obtaining permission for suitable persons to proceed to India. Our petition is to procure protection for persons and property already in India.

Resolutions adopted.

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priety commit it; we are directed to request that you transmit it as early as possible addressed to Mr. Burls, 56, Lothbury, London.

“ We are, dear brother,

“ Yours, affectionately,

“ (Signed by order of the Committee,)

“ WILLIAM BURLS, CHAIRMAN.

To the Rev.

“ JOSEPH IVIMEY, SECRETARY.

“ P. S. You will have the goodness to read the whole contents of this paper from the pulpit, and get other ministers in the town and neighbourhood to do the same.”

The public meeting was held and numerous attended on April 6th. Mr. Gutteridge reluctantly took the chair, wishing some member of Parliament to fill it; when this was overruled he consented, and after prayer by the Rev. Mr. Sutcliff, of Olney, Mr. Gutteridge opened the meeting by reading the afore-said requisition from the Baptist Associated Ministers, to acquaint the company by what means they had been called together.

The three first resolutions were proposed by Henry Waymouth Esq. and seconded by the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Cox; the fourth resolution was moved by Mr. Beddome, and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Winter; the fifth by the Rev. Mr. Ivimey, and seconded by J. Butterworth, Esq. M. P. and the Rev. William Newman; the sixth by B. Shaw, Esq. M. P. and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Sutcliff.

The Resolutions, accompanied by the above mentioned circular letter and address, were printed, and sent without delay to every Baptist minister in England.

The proceedings are thus recorded in the Baptist Magazine for May, 1813:—

“ At a meeting of the supporters and friends of the Baptist Mission in India, resident in and near the metropolis, held at the New London Tavern, Cheapside, on Tuesday the 6th day of April, 1813, Joseph Gutteridge, Esq. in the Chair, it was resolved unanimously—

“ That there are more than fifty millions of the inhabitants of

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Petition adopted.

India, subjects of the British empire, under the influence of the most deplorable superstitions.

“That the Baptist Missionary Society, from a deep conviction of the invaluable blessings of Christian knowledge, has for nearly twenty years been endeavouring to promote this desirable object among the inhabitants of India; and principally by the translation and circulation of the sacred Scriptures in the various languages of the East, and the formation of extensive schools for instruction in the Holy Scriptures, both in the English and native languages: in the prosecution of this work they have, by a divine blessing, met with considerable success—and that this meeting entertains an ardent wish that the legislature of their country may encourage their endeavours to pursue this important design, by which the happiness and eternal welfare of so large a number of their fellow subjects, sunk in heathenism and idolatry, may be effectually promoted.

“That this meeting most cordially concurs in the Resolution expressed by the honourable House of Commons in the year 1793; ‘That it is the peculiar and bounden duty of the legislature to promote, by all just and prudent means, the interest and happiness of the British dominions in India; and that for these ends such measures ought to be adopted as may gradually tend to their advancement in useful knowledge, and to their religious and moral improvement.’

“That the cordial thanks of this meeting are due, and are hereby presented, to the Rev. Dr. Ryland, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Sutcliffe, Mr. Hogg, and others, the original promoters and subsequent supporters in this country, of the Baptist Mission in India.”

The following is the Petition adopted by this Meeting:—

“To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled:—

“The humble Petition of the undersigned, being supporters and friends of the Baptist Mission in India resident in and near the metropolis; sheweth—

“That, in the year 1793, certain benevolent persons, who had formed themselves into a Society for propagating the know-

ledge of Christianity among Heathen nations, regarding with deep concern the millions of their fellow creatures and fellow subjects in British India, sunk by gross superstition, ignorance, and vice into the lowest state of moral degradation, were desirous of establishing a Christian mission among them.

“The missionaries first sent out by this Society were settled in the vicinity of Malta, and in the year 1799 they, with others who afterwards joined them, removed to Serampore, near Calcutta. Their exertions, though opposed by many formidable obstacles, and particularly by the supposed invincible attachment of the natives to their caste, have nevertheless, through the blessing of God, proved eminently successful in diffusing Christian light and knowledge.

“By long and patient assiduity they have qualified themselves to converse with and address the natives in several of the Eastern languages, and in pursuance of their original design have translated the whole of the sacred Scriptures into the Bengalee, and the New Testament into the Orissa, Hindee, and Mahratta, as well as the parent Sungskrit; which, being printed, are eagerly perused by the natives, and have greatly contributed to raise the standard of morals, as well as to bring numbers to the faith and obedience of Christianity.

“Schools have also been established, in which several hundreds of native children, previously obnoxious to every species of wretchedness, are gratuitously instructed at the request of their parents.

“The conductors of the Baptist Mission in India have been long known to the leading members of the government in that country, from whom the most unequivocal testimony has been received, not only as to their talents and qualifications for the work in which they are engaged, but as to their exemplary conduct and peaceable demeanour.

“These indefatigable men have, by their literary labours, acquired a property in India, amounting to several thousand pounds, which has been devoted, not to their private emolument, but to promote the object of the mission. By their exertions, and the aid of remittances from this country, printing offices, and other buildings have been erected and settled upon trust,

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Petition adopted.

with a view to facilitate the grand and important design of translating the Bible into all the languages of the East.

“ It is with gratitude that your Petitioners acknowledge the favourable light in which their missionaries have been and are held by the government in India; notwithstanding which your Petitioners, being themselves deeply sensible of the value of a legal toleration, are anxiously solicitous that the protection of the law may be extended to their brethren in India, in such a measure as to the wisdom of parliament may seem meet.

“ That your Petitioners humbly conceive, that after a probation of nearly twenty years, during which period their missionaries are allowed to have conducted themselves with propriety, and in which the incalculable benefits arising from their labours are evident; that as British subjects, warmly attached to British interests, they hereafter may be entitled to legal protection from the British government, so long as they shall in all civil concerns prove themselves obedient to that government.

“ Your Petitioners do not wish for any exclusive privileges, but are desirous that the same facilities and protection should be afforded to Christians of other denominations as to themselves; nor are your Petitioners desirous that such facilities and protection should be granted without every reasonable and practicable testimonial being given that the persons to be employed as missionaries shall be men of unimpeached character, of sufficient qualifications, and of unshaken attachment to the constitution and government of these realms.

“ Your Petitioners, confiding in the wisdom of your Honourable House, therefore humbly pray that as the renewal of the charter of the East India Company is now under consideration, a clause may be introduced in the new charter, by which such protection may be afforded to the missionaries already in India, that so long as they shall in all civil concerns be obedient to the government, they shall be allowed to pursue the important work in which they are engaged without interruption, and by which clause the friends of this Society in this kingdom may be permitted to send out to India, in British ships, other missionaries to promote the same benevolent and important objects.

“ And your Petitioners shall ever pray.”

Petition of the Baptist Missionary Society.

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A petition was also presented to the House of Lords, from the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society. The following letter to the Right Honourable the Marquis Wellesley was sent by the secretary :

Kettering, April 26, 1813.

“ My Lord,

“ The kindness and liberality with which your lordship has treated the Baptist missionaries emboldens me, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, to solicit that your lordship would do them the honour of presenting their petition to the House of Lords ; and, if it meets your lordship’s approbation, of supporting it.

“ That your lordship may judge of the petition, I have enclosed a copy. Your lordship’s answer, addressed to Mr. Burls, No. 56, Lothbury, at whose house the petition lies, signifying the time and place in which your lordship shall be waited upon with the petition, will add to the obligations of

“ My lord,

“ Your lordship’s most humble and obedient servant,

“ ANDREW FULLER.”

“ To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled.

“ The humble Petition of the Committee, and other Members of the Baptist Missionary Society,

“ Sheweth,

“ That your Petitioners, convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, and feeling for the moral state of their fellow subjects in Hindoostan, did, in the year One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-three, undertake to establish a Christian mission among them. That it has been with reluctance that they have sent their missionaries by foreign ships, rather than by those of the East India Company, and merely owing to their having been previously assured, that applications to the directors on the subject would not be received. That, in sending out their missionaries, they have not failed to inculcate on them, in the most affectionate and solemn manner, their obligations to be peaceable,

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Petition of the Baptist Missionary Society.

obedient, and loyal subjects, in all places where they might reside ; and this, not merely as a matter of prudence, but for conscience' sake. That their present missionaries in British India and elsewhere, are well known to have conducted themselves on these principles.

“That your Petitioners, in the course of twenty years, have never heard of any dissatisfaction which has been excited by the labours of their missionaries, so as to produce any thing like tumult or disorder. That, however attached the Hindoos are to their superstitions, and however dangerous it would be to force Christianity upon them, there is scarcely a city or town which the missionaries enter, but the people are desirous of conversing with them, and of reading the Scriptures which the missionaries have translated into their languages, and which, when solicited, have been put into their hands. That your Petitioners acknowledge with gratitude the liberality and kindness which their missionaries have experienced from those Right Honourable Persons, who, during the last twenty years have presided over the British government in India, to whom your Petitioners can appeal as to the character, conduct, and talents of their missionaries. That out of four hundred and eighty persons (twenty-five of whom were Brahmans) who, in July, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twelve, had been baptized by their missionaries, there is not an individual who is not well affected to the British government in India. That the property of this Society in India, partly arising from the liberality of the Christian public, and partly from the literary labours and unexampled generosity of the missionaries, and consisting of public and private buildings, a type foundry, a paper manufactory, a printing establishment, and monies in the Company's funds, amounts to many thousand pounds. Although your Petitioners, in this their petition, confine their requests to their own missionaries, yet they have no desire to possess any exclusive privileges whatever ; nor have they any objection to furnish every reasonable and practicable testimonial concerning the persons to be hereafter employed by them as missionaries, that they are men of good character, and well affected to the constitution and government of these realms.

Deputation waits on the Prime Minister.

[1813.]

“Your Petitioners, confiding in the wisdom of your lordships, therefore humbly pray, that, as the renewal of the charter of the East India Company is now under consideration, a clause may be introduced in the new charter, by which such protection may be afforded to the missionaries already in India, that so long as they shall in all civil concerns be obedient to the government, they shall be allowed to pursue the important work in which they are engaged, without interruption, and by which clause the friends of this Society in this kingdom may be permitted to send out in British ships other missionaries to promote the same benevolent and important objects.

“And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.”*

On May 20, a deputation on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, consisting of the Rev. A. Fuller, B. Shaw, Esq. M. P. W. Burls, Esq. Joseph Gutteridge, Esq. and Joseph Ivimey, waited, according to appointment, on the Right Honourable Lord Liverpool, at Fyfe House. Nothing could exceed the urbanity and frankness with which his lordship received them, and the condescending familiarity with which he conversed. The following minutes of the conversation were made immediately after, from the recollection of the person by whom they were written :—

The first point, from a written paper they had prepared, submitted to his lordship was, that the Board of Control should be required to issue their licenses to persons who were engaged as missionaries for British India by the Society.

To this his lordship replied, “This proposition cannot be complied with, because opposed to the principle on which the whole proceedings relative to India turn, viz. ‘That no person whatever shall proceed to India for any purpose whatever, unless they receive a license from the Board of Control.’ Your proposal, if granted, would deprive government of that discretion which they feel it necessary they should exercise.”

It was stated by the deputation, that, for government to

* The prayer of this petition, it will be observed, is in the precise words of that from the London meeting.

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Conversation with the Prime Minister.

exercise such a power, would be to make them the judges of the qualifications of missionaries, for which of course they were incompetent.

His lordship answered, "It is not for the purpose of judging of the qualifications of missionaries, but for the sake of reserving to themselves that discretion which may enable the government to exercise power in such cases as they may judge injurious to the British possessions in India. I will suppose a case," said his lordship, "such numbers of missionaries may be sent out, that it may be proper they should interfere, to prevent too many persons going there in that character."

The deputation said, if the proposed act directed the Board of Control "to license fit and proper persons," it was apprehended, unless it were specified also that this clause was meant to include Protestant Dissenters, that none but persons episcopally ordained could obtain licenses: in which case no Dissenting missionaries could go to India.

Lord Liverpool answered to this, "No such thing is intended as to make a difference between missionaries of the Church of England, and those of the respectable and decent sects of Dissenters; but those who would carry the principles of Toleration to the greatest extent, must admit that there are some sects so ridiculous, Johanna Southcott's for instance, that to permit such persons to go to India to teach Christianity would be highly improper and dangerous."

The deputation replied, that if the government was always to be composed of such persons as now constituted it, there would be no danger; but persons otherwise minded may have the authority, who may think it right to prevent all Protestant Dissenters.

To this his lordship said, "The different bodies of commercial men are satisfied with the proposed restrictions. They have no objection that the government should have the power of exercising a discretion as to the persons who are to go to India, and that they shall not go to reside in the interior of the countries, without obtaining permission from the government of the respective Presidencies of India. As things now stand," continued his lordship, "your grievances are well founded, because the East

India Directors, being a chartered company, may capriciously refuse a license, and injure you and your missionaries in other ways, without being amenable even to Parliament, because they may plead their chartered rights, as they have sometimes done. But should the Board of Control refuse a license capriciously, it will be subject to the interference of Parliament, to which you can always refer your appeal. That government is disposed to befriend the Dissenters, I may appeal to facts. I was three years in the colonial department, and there was no application made to us by Dissenters for favours to be granted, or for grievances to be redressed, but what was attended to and remedied, except in the case of Jamaica, which is a difficulty to us as well as to you. I mention this, to shew that government has no right to abridge you of your privileges as to the colonies, nor have they the power were they so disposed."

The deputation stated, that, should the Board of Control confine their licenses to missionaries of the Church of England, there were no means for relief to the Dissenters, unless they were to be expressly specified in the Act of Parliament.

Lord Liverpool answered, "If the application be from members of the Church of England, they will of course require what they consider sufficient testimonials from members of that church; but if it be from a body of Dissenters, they will look to that body, to give the testimony required. I shall give it as my opinion," said his lordship, "that no difference should be made between the members of the Establishment and the Protestant Dissenters."

The deputation asked, what testimonials would be expected by the Board of Control from merchants, who wished to become residents in India?

His lordship answered, "The application of a respectable house, the partners of which will be expected to be guarantees for his proper conduct."

The deputation replied, that the only reason for their wishing a legislative enactment, was, that different persons in government may adopt different lines of conduct. While Lord Mansfield presided at the King's Bench, the most liberal construction was put upon the Act of Toleration; but since his

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Conversation with the Prime Minister.

death, a very different construction had been adopted by his successors.*

Lord Liverpool answered, "The government expressed a readiness to grant relief, as soon as the apprehensions of Dissenters were stated to them. The effect of your application to Parliament on the occasion referred to, is a proof of the superior advantages you will possess from the East India Company having no power to do you an injury, upon the mere right given them by their charter. You may be assured government will act upon a different footing, because they know their conduct is amenable to parliament."

The deputation said, another request on the part of Missionary Societies was, that the British government in India may not have the power of sending home missionaries upon the mere ground of apprehension, when no charge of improper conduct had been proved against them. Such instances had taken place; no objection was felt to their being sent home, and the expenses being paid, if it were first proved they had acted wrong.

His lordship said, "That is a discretion which you must be subject to; every direction however will be given to prevent the power from being improperly exercised; but should the government in India send home any missionary, they must also send to the Board of Control the reasons upon which they proceeded in doing so, and be accountable to the government at home for their conduct."

His lordship was assured that the deputation had the fullest confidence in the friendly disposition of his Majesty's government; and that the Protestant Dissenters, as a body, were deeply and gratefully sensible of the many acts of kindness they had manifested towards them. This conversation is now for the first time printed, and I have had the gratification, by perusing the notes made by another member of the deputation, to find it minutely correct.

Many noblemen and leading members of the House of Commons, were also waited on by various members of the Committee, and informed of the objects of the petitions to

* This was an allusion to Lord Sidmouth's Bill.

Parliament. These noblemen and gentlemen in general appeared to labour under a strong conviction, that Christianity could not be propagated with safety in India, and that similar results would follow as the mutiny at Vellore; they were reminded of the difference between such compulsory measures as those which were there adopted, and propagating truth by an appeal to reason, and using scriptural means of instruction.*

The Petition of the London Committee was presented to the House of Peers by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, and that of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society by the Right Honourable Marquis of Wellesley.

The following article appeared in the Baptist Magazine for June, 1813, and was written by the late Mr. Fuller, who had attended the House of Commons on the 14th of May (the only time he was ever there), and heard the remarks of General Gascoigne which are mentioned in it.

Petitions to Parliament in favour of religious Toleration in India.

“ The number of these Petitions which have arrived in town of late is very great. The signatures to them, besides those which have been given to members of Parliament in the country, amount to 50,466. The interest taken in this important object is general through the kingdom. The result cannot at present be ascertained. It is easy to perceive by the manner in which many

* One of these noble lords remarked, “ I think there is some danger in the measure, lest the Hindoos should be provoked to an insurrection. A young British officer in India some little time ago, happened to shoot one of their sacred monkies, and it was likely to have excited a mutiny.” It was replied, that our missionaries were to preach the gospel, and not to shoot sacred monkies.—The late Lord Stanhope expressed similar apprehensions. He was told that our plan was similar to the conduct of Luther at the Reformation. Some told him the Papists were celebrating mass in the neighbourhood, and wished to know whether they should go and pull down their idols. “ Let us endeavour to instruct them in the truths of the gospel,” said the Reformer, “ and they will pull down the idols themselves.” His lordship who was standing in a passage of the House of Lords, conversing with Mr. Fuller and another, exclaimed loud enough to make the house ring with his voice, “ Ay, ay, ay—that’s it, that’s it, that’s it; I have spent my life in propagating light, I will present your petition.”

1813.]

Prejudice of some of the Legislature.

of them are presented to Parliament, that there is a strong prejudice to encounter. One of the members for Liverpool, for instance (General Gascoigne), in presenting the petition from 2,800 of the inhabitants of that town in favour of the Baptist mission, on May 14th, was understood by those who heard him to express himself as follows :—‘ This is a petition from some anabaptists in Liverpool, signed by nearly three thousand of them, praying for liberty to convert the Hindoos to their own particular faith.’ To the same purpose it was reported in the *Times* paper of May 15th.

“ To say nothing of the name *anabaptists*, which they utterly disown, how could General Gascoigne represent them as petitioning for liberty to convert the Hindoos to their own particular faith? Doubtless, the Christianity which they petitioned for a free toleration to propagate, was such as they understood to be taught in the New Testament : it was not merely nor mainly their peculiar sentiments as Baptists, however, that they wished to teach, but the common salvation, and equal liberty for other denominations as for their own. We have not seen the petition, but we are certain that such was the object of it. To what a pitch of prejudice must the honourable member have arrived to be able thus to misrepresent his constituents !

“ The known prevalence of such prejudices furnishes matter for prayer to Him who governs all minds. If God see it necessary, he can sway them ; and if not, we have no reason to despond. Whether a legal enactment be framed in the expected charter or not, we have no reason to think the work will stop. If God see it most for his glory that his servants shall exist by mere sufferance, as they have done hitherto, so be it ; it is for us to do our duty, and leave the issue.

“ Deputations from the Committee of the supporters and friends of the Baptist Mission in India have waited upon many of the members of both Houses of Parliament, to request them to present the petitions, from whom they have received the most respectful attentions.

“ We learn, by the public papers of May the 19th, that Mr. Wilberforce presented the petition from the Committee and other members of the Baptist Missionary Society, and delivered

his sentiments in such a manner as powerfully to attract the attention of the house. He is said to have stated, that it had been represented, as if the object of these missionaries was to convert the Hindoos to their own particular faith; whereas it was not in pursuit of a *sectarian* purpose, but of spreading the *common Christianity* that they were engaged; that the most honourable testimony had been borne of them by the Marquis Wellesley, and Lord Minto; and that by devoting the whole profit of their literary labours to the public good, they had furnished an example of disinterestedness worthy of the highest admiration. The petition was then read, and ordered to lie upon the table, in which the honourable member for Liverpool so far retraced his steps, as to express his hearty concurrence! We feel much obliged to Mr. Wilberforce for his conduct on this occasion. The advocate of humanity is the friend of Christianity; and we cannot but hope that the victory of the former over the cause of slavery will be the presage of the triumph of the latter over that of infidelity."

The number of petitions presented to both Houses of Parliament, from the friends and supporters of the Baptist mission in England and Wales, and one from Dublin, was 262, the signatures 51,142,* besides the London petition, which was numerous signed. The Baptist Magazine for June, in giving an account of the Annual Missionary Meeting, thus states the result of this most arduous and anxious application to the legislature respecting the new charter:

"The friends of the mission on this occasion dined together at the London Tavern. This meeting was rendered additionally interesting by a report which was read after dinner, detailing the measures which had been taken by the 'Supporters and Friends of the Baptist Mission,' relative to the application to Parliament to procure the protection of the law for missionaries in India, and permission to send out others to join them in the Company's ships.

"Much anxiety had been expressed by the friends of missions

* See a list of them in the Baptist Magazine for June, 1813.

1813.]

Resolution of the Legislature.

respecting the decision of the House of Commons on Tuesday evening, on the twelfth resolution, introduced by Lord Castle-reagh. The report announced that it had been carried that morning, at three o'clock, by a majority of eighty-nine against thirty-six. The triumph of Christianity over infidelity, on this occasion, furnishes another motive to fervent gratitude and unlimited confidence in that God who has always dwelt in the 'bush burning with fire,' and preserved it from being consumed.

"The conduct of his Majesty's government has fully justified the confidence which had been reposed in them by those in London who have conducted the business of the petitions; and the zealous efforts of those honourable members of the House of Commons who so ably advocated the character of our missionaries against the attacks of a Forbes—a Montgomery—a Moore, and others, who endeavoured to sully their reputation, demand the fervent affection of all who long for the conversion of the millions of idolaters in British India.

"The following is the Resolution adopted by the House of Commons:—

"XII. That it is the duty of this country to promote the interests and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, and that such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement. That, in furtherance of the above objects, sufficient facilities shall be afforded, by law, to persons desirous of going to and remaining in India for the purpose of accomplishing those benevolent designs. Provided always, that the authority of the local governments, respecting the intercourse of Europeans with the interior of the country, be preserved, and that the principles of the British government, on which the natives of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion, be inviolably maintained."

"We understand that the defeated champions of Hindooism and infidelity intend to try their strength once more while the bill is passing through the House. Let all the friends of Chris-

Letters of Thanks.

[1813.]

tianity be found at their post also, and cry mightily to God that he will 'send forth his light and his truth,' and 'let those that love him be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength.'"

It is added, that the next evening, Thursday, the measure was adopted without opposition by the House of Lords, and it soon after obtained the royal assent. After the business was finally settled, the committee in London passed several resolutions of thanks to those Peers and Gentlemen who had rendered essential services to the cause. The following are copies of the letters addressed to their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Kent and Sussex.

TO H. R. H. THE DUKE OF SUSSEX.

Denmark Hill, August 21, 1813.

" May it please your Royal Highness,

" I beg permission to transmit to you the resolutions of the Committee of the 'Supporters and Friends of the Baptist Mission in India.'

" Your Royal Highness's condescension in presenting their petition to the House of Lords, calls for their warmest thanks. That important object which has now been successfully carried through parliament, it is not doubted, will be productive of the happiness of our Asiatic subjects and of the peace of the empire, whatever alarms of a contrary nature may have been unnecessarily excited.

" I have the honour to be

" Your Royal Highness's

" Most obliged and obedient humble servant,

" JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE."

TO H. R. H. THE DUKE OF KENT.

Denmark Hill, August 21, 1813.

" May it please your Royal Highness,

" I beg permission to communicate to you the resolutions of the Committee of the supporters and friends of the Baptist Mission in India.

1813.]

Proceeding of the Board of Control.

“ Your Royal Highness’s condescension towards a deputation of this committee, and the expressions of your good will towards an object connected with the welfare of British subjects in India, demand our grateful acknowledgments.

“ Although, on a cursory view of this subject, and under some of its aspects, alarm has been unnecessarily excited, we are persuaded that the introduction of the pure and benign principles of Christianity among the natives of India will be conveying to them the best of temporal benefits ; and, so far as its sacred precepts are embraced, prepare for a happy immortality ; and that your Royal Highness will ever have reason to reflect on the countenance you have given to this measure, with the most solid satisfaction and pleasure.

“ Your Royal Highness will permit me to add my best thanks for your personal attention to me.

“ I have the honour to be

“ Your Royal Highness’s

“ Most obliged, obedient and humble servant,

“ JOSEPH GUTTERIDGE.”

An opportunity soon occurred for putting the government to the test respecting this enactment. The Rev. William Yates was ordained as a missionary for the East Indies. The committee of the mission applied for a license to the Directors at the East India House, offering the required bond as a guarantee. The Directors peremptorily refused, and without assigning any reason. A deputation of the mission in consequence waited on the President of the Board of Control, who received them much more graciously than on the former visit. They stated the refusal they had received, and requested his lordship’s kind interference on behalf of the Society. A few days only had elapsed, when they received information from the Board of Control, that “ the Directors had been *directed* to issue the requisite license for Mr. Yates to proceed to India.”

From the third memoir of the Translations carrying on at Serampore, in a letter addressed to the Society in 1812, by the Rev. Messrs. Carey, Marshman, and Ward, it will be seen to what an extent these had been carried.

Death of the Rev. A. Fuller.

[1815.]

Abstract of the State of the Translations.

Names.	New Testament.	Old Testament.
Sanskrit.	Printed.	{ Pentateuch printed. Historical books in the press.
Bengalee.	Third edition printed.	{ The whole distributing. Second Edition of the Pentateuch in the press.
Orissa.	Printed and distributing.	{ The Hagiographia and Prophetical books printed. Historical books in the press.
Hindee.	Printed and distributing.	{ All translated except a book or two of the Pentateuch.
Mahratta.	Printed and distributing.	{ Pentateuch and Hagiographia translated. Pentateuch in the press; Genesis printed.
Seek.	{ Printed to Mark. The whole translated.	{ Translating the Pentateuch. Numbers in hand.
Telinga.	{ At press. The whole translated.	The Pentateuch translating.
Burman.	{ Types ready; Matthew and Mark preparing for press.	
Maguda.	Commencing.	
Cushmire.	Translating (Mark).	
Chinese.	{ Two gospels printed: the others at press. The whole New Testament translated.	{ The Pentateuch translated to Numbers.

In 1815, May 7th, the mission underwent a great affliction, by the lamented death of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, of Kettering, its most disinterested and laborious secretary; a man to whom the Christian world, and especially the Baptist denomination, owes a tribute of more than common respect. The whole weight of the mission had lain on him since the death of his friend and neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Sutcliff, of Olney. He was succeeded in his office by another of his most intimate friends, and one of the original founders of the Society, the Rev. John Ryland of Bristol; who, after some time, was for a short period assisted by the Rev. James Hinton, of Oxford, and then by the Rev. John Dyer, the present secretary.

The reader will have perceived that in the petition of the

1815.]

Letter from the Rev. William Ward.

Baptist Missionary Society in 1813, it was stated that the Society in England was possessed of very considerable property in India principally at Serampore, which is there enumerated. That this was not a mistaken view of the subject, nor an exaggerated statement by the Committee; and that it exactly accorded with the views then entertained by Missionaries in India, the following letter received by the writer immediately after, from a late most excellent missionary, will prove. It will be remarked that when this letter was written the death of Mr. Fuller was not known in India.

From the Rev. William Ward, dated Serampore, Oct. 13, 1815.

“My dear Brother,

“With great pleasure I received the proposal of correspondence, and I now begin the pleasant work of writing the first letter. This is the sixteenth anniversary of our arrival, that is, of brother Marshman and the rest of us in the *Criterion*. It was on the 13th of October we first set our feet on the shores of India. We did not then calculate on what has followed; for surely in no case were the words of the prophet more verified than in our own: ‘He led them by a way which they knew not.’ Then our dear brethren Carey and Thomas were in the circumstances of men locked up from danger, but they would have died in their retirement, had not an unwelcome arm brought the former before kings and magistrates for his name’s sake.

“At that time two or three hypocrites had talked of becoming Christians for the sake of the loaves and fishes, without a single thought of going a step further: these perished in their hypocrisy; and the only visible success then was, first obstacles had been overcome, and brother Carey had laid hold of the Bengalee. Now let us look back at the work which the Lord has done in these sixteen years. A mission settlement has been formed. The premises belonging to this station, *or rather to the Society*, have cost more than 50,000 rupees, and the stock of the printing-office cannot be worth less than 20,000, bringing in a mission revenue of 48,000 rupees a year. At the same place a large church, chiefly converted Hindoos, has been formed, to

Letter from the Rev. William Ward.

[1815.]

whom employment is afforded, and they are now, from all *casts* and from all *parts*, training up in Christian families, and a young progeny of native Christians are rising up to bless our eyes. A branch of the same church exists at Calcutta, the Indian metropolis, from which many preachers have been sent forth to the heathen; and here a place of worship which cost several thousand pounds has been reared by the missionaries alone, and now mortgaged to them. From this church and the labours of the brethren have gone forth Carapict, a missionary at Surat; Thomas, another conducting a station at Jessore; Debruyn, another member who has lately baptized several Mugs, and has formed a church at Chittagong; Charles Gardiner, and two native itinerants at Burhampore; Fernandez, pastor of a considerable church at Dinagepore; Captain M. and a native itinerant at Nagpore, in the Mahratta country; Reily, a young man beginning to preach in the Malay at Java; William Carey, Jun. at the head of a prosperous station at Cutwa with six or more native itinerants; Peter, pastor of a church in Orissa not far from the great temple of Juggernaut; at Agra two brethren at the head of the station there, the one an European. At present at Delhi the ancient capital of Hindoosthan, and the residence of its emperor, a young man named Kerr, who maintains himself, and preaches, and supports native brethren; at Guya, a bathing place of great boast by the Hindoos, a young man who maintains himself and preaches to the heathen; Krishnu, at Malda, the first native baptized, and now at the head of a station once occupied by brother Mardon; Thompson, a young man stationed at Patna, a large commercial city; two native itinerants at Sylhet: Felix Carey, who has translated a good part of the Scriptures into Burman, printed a grammar, and prepared a good part of a Burman dictionary; Smith, a young man employed in preaching in Hindoosthan in the neighbourhood of Calcutta and Serampore; Jabez Carey, employed in the island of Amboyna, placed at the head of the native schools by the government, and treasurer to the Bible Society, &c. Add to all these blessings bestowed on the work begun sixteen years ago, the Scriptures issued and issuing from the Serampore press, in the languages of so many nations sitting in the region and shadow of death;

1812.]

The Roman Catholic Question.

Sungskritu, Bengalee, Hindoosthanee, Mahratta, Sikh, Arissa, Gujuraatee, Toilingu, Assam, Khasee, Burman, Pushtoo, Kur-natu, various dialects of the Hindoo, &c. besides all the works tending to promote Eastern literature. God forbid that any name but his should have the glory of all this. In his hand a straw and an elephant are the same; and pride in such a case as this would be the height of baseness and ignorance. A different scene of things would have placed the agents at Serampore in a vassallage to those events that would have left them groaning with the prophet, 'Who hath believed our report.'

"My dear brother, my paper is full. If you can find time, favour me with two or three letters during the year.

"Ever, my dear brother's,

"W. WARD.

"P. S. You will see this can only remain a private communication; if any of it sees the light it should not come from one of us; as we should be charged with egotism.

"Rev. Mr. Ivimey, London."

Mr. Ward has not mentioned the European missionaries who had been sent out by the Society, or who were then labouring in India. The public are well acquainted with the names of Drs. Carey and Marshman, Messrs. Chamberlain, Charter, Robinson, Phillips, Lawson, Yates, E. Carey, Pearce, Penney and others. Three of these, as well as Mr. Ward, have since rested from their labours; Mr. E. Carey is at present, on account of ill-health, in London; the Rev. Dr. Marshman is also in England.—The author must now drop the history of this mission, and refer the reader to the "Periodical Accounts" and other publications issued by the Society, especially the "Missionary Herald," published every month in the Baptist Magazine.

The year 1812 witnessed scenes of angry debate, on a subject new to both the political and the religious parts of the nation. The Roman Catholics of the empire, not satisfied with their religious principles being tolerated, now put forward their "claims" as they called them, to be admitted to an eligibility to places of honour and emolument in the state. This struggle on their

part led a number of Protestants in London on Jan. 22, 1813, to form themselves into a society, entitled, "The Protestant Union for the defence and support of the Protestant Religion and the British Constitution, as established at the glorious revolution in 1688." The third and principal resolution of this society is thus expressed, "That the claims of the Roman Catholics, together with the principles and rights of the Protestants, ought to be gravely and impartially brought before the public, not with any party views, nor in a spirit of personal hostility, but of moderation and good will; not by exciting prejudice and clamour against the Roman Catholics, but by circulating and eliciting such information as will shew whether their claims can be allowed consistently with the safety of our Protestant state."

This subject was at that time but ill understood; even some of the Dissenting ministers confounded it with that of liberty of conscience, and were therefore disposed to lend the Roman Catholics their assistance by an application to the legislature on their behalf.

The general body of the three denominations had adopted at the annual meeting, April 21, 1812, a petition; the prayer of which was to obtain "the repeal of all the penal statutes now in force upon the subject of religion."

This was again brought forward at the library, in February 1813, on the ground that as there had been a new Parliament called since their last annual meeting, it was desirable the former petition should be again presented. Some considerable opposition was made to this, on the ground that as the Roman Catholic question was then agitated in the House of Commons, it would look as if the Protestant dissenters had made a common cause with them; that it would be wise to avoid the appearance of having done so, as their cases were totally dissimilar; and therefore a strict neutrality ought to be observed, as it was not a question of religious liberty but of political power. The petition was, however, adopted; forty-six ministers only signed it, though Mr. William Smith, the Chairman of the deputies for defending the civil rights of dissenters, on presenting it said, it was adopted unanimously. The clerk of the House of Commons indorsed it as "the petition of the Protestant Dissenters in favour of the

1813.]

Divided Opinions of Dissenters.

Roman Catholic claims," and it was doubtless so considered by the house. In the House of Peers the Right Honourable Lord Holland presented a similar petition, saying it came from the successors of those nonconformists who had suffered so much on account of religion, &c. Nor can there be any doubt that some of the ministers intended it should be so understood, notwithstanding such intention was solemnly disclaimed.

The Roman Catholics, however, failed in their object which was to be rendered eligible to have seats in Parliament; for after the bill had twice passed the House of Commons, it was lost on the third reading by a majority of four, to the no small gratification of those ministers, and others among the dissenters, who were of opinion that the fundamental principles of the Act of Settlement in 1688 would have been violated by their admission to a share in legislation.

This subject in various shapes has been often brought forward since that memorable period in both Houses of Parliament, and has frequently been rejected. In one or two instances it has passed the Commons, but has always been checked in the Lords. The Societies of Dissenting Ministers and the Deputies have been generally convulsed by it at those periods, but up to this time its supporters in those bodies have never been able to carry their point to get the votes of majorities in its favour. So that hitherto they have maintained the most strict neutrality on the subject; and in regard to petitions to the legislature, they have neither "blessed them at all nor cursed them at all."

So far as the writer can judge, a very great alteration of sentiment has taken place upon this important subject; it is his opinion that the majority of orthodox Dissenters at this time (1827) are strongly opposed to any further concessions being made to the Roman Catholics. Many separate congregations indeed have at different times petitioned the legislature *against* them, from an apprehension that their adherence to the Pope prevents them from giving full and undivided allegiance to the king; and that from the intolerance manifested by Roman Catholics, where they have had unrestrained power, they cannot be safely entrusted with it in a protestant community. Only let them admit that in all cases they owe entire allegiance to the king and not to

the pope ; and give the required securities to preserve unimpaired, the supremacy of the chief magistrate, and they may then be admitted without danger to share with other subjects the honours and immunities of the state. But then this is requiring from them what they cannot comply with, unless they cease to be Roman Catholics, because a recognition of the pope's supremacy is with them a vital principle of their religion.

At the close of this eventful year the Baptist Society for propagating the gospel in Ireland was contemplated, and measures adopted for carrying it into effect.

For several years before, at distant intervals, some of our ministers had visited the sister kingdom for the purpose of collecting for the Baptist Missionary Society. The impression they received from beholding the religious and moral condition of Ireland led them to doubt the propriety of bringing away money from a country for propagating the gospel in India, which was itself in circumstances but little superior, and in some parts not at all.

In July and August the late Rev. John Saffery of Salisbury, and the Rev. George Barclay of Kilwinning, made extensive journeys in Ireland for the above mentioned object. An account of their visit was given by Mr. Saffery in the Baptist Magazine for October, 1813. In a letter, dated Sep. 6, 1813, Mr. Saffery suggested that some minister should visit Ireland annually, patronized by the Missionary Society. He added, "But if it should not be judged proper to burden the mission with the care or the expense of this concern ; is it not a proper one for the Union, or for a Society expressly formed for the purpose, called, 'The Baptist Society for propagating the gospel in Ireland ;' or bearing any other appropriate name? Its committee would correspond with our brethren in Ireland, and receive subscriptions which we are persuaded would be sent as soon as its existence was known ; and otherwise manage its concerns."

In the Magazine for January, 1814, there is another paper on this subject written by Mr. Saffery, dated Dec. 1, 1813, in which he says, "I have since communicated with some brethren on this subject, and find many difficulties are in the way of forming a Society for this purpose ; and still more are opposed to such an

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Baptist Irish Society.

appropriation of the funds of our Missionary Society. While, therefore we are at a loss about the means, the work is in danger of stopping, as recent intelligence from Dublin assures us, that the small sum is exhausted; and that they are looking to us for help."

Before this "Appeal," however, was printed, measures had been taken in London to form a separate Society for the purpose. It was ascertained that the Rev. Messrs. Fuller, Sutcliff, and Ryland, were friendly to the plan; and the committee had agreed that twenty guineas should be voted from the funds of the Baptist Mission for its commencement.

Encouraged by these prospects, notwithstanding the many difficulties which presented themselves, a circular letter was addressed to all the Baptist ministers in London and its vicinity, requesting them to attend, and to bring their friends with them to the vestry of Eagle Street meeting house, at six o'clock in the evening of the 6th of December. Eight persons only assembled; but these proceeded to business, and adopted resolutions which were published in the Magazine for April, 1814. The following are printed from the original minutes:

"Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland.

"December 6, 1813.

"At a meeting held at Eagle Street meeting-house, convened by a circular letter addressed to all the Baptist ministers in London and its vicinity, to take into consideration the best means of promoting the knowledge of the gospel in Ireland, it was resolved—

"1. That deeply affected with the deplorable condition of a large proportion of our fellow subjects in Ireland, we are anxiously desirous of giving assistance in any way that may furnish them with the means of moral and evangelical instruction.

"2. That we regard with christian affection our brethren, the Baptist Ministers, and Churches in Ireland, and very cordially approve of their efforts to spread the savour of the Redeemer's name in that part of the united kingdom.

"3. That for the purpose of aiding their efforts generally, and increasing the number of labourers in that extensive field, it is highly expedient to form a Society to be called, 'The Baptist Society for promoting Itinerant preaching in Ireland.'

"4. That the persons now present, be a provisional committee for promoting this object.

"5. That Messrs. Ivimey, T. Smith, and W. Shenstone be a sub-committee; and they are requested to obtain an interview with Mr. Saffery, who visited Ireland last summer, and to converse or correspond with others who are personally acquainted with that country, in order to adopt proper measures and prepare suitable rules for organizing the Society, to be considered at a future meeting.

"JOSEPH IVIMEY, SECRETARY, *pro tem.*"

The following notice and particulars appeared soon afterwards.

"The sub-committee having corresponded and conversed with Mr. Saffery, and others well acquainted with the state of religion in Ireland, are increasingly convinced of the urgency of the case, and that it is very desirable a Society be immediately formed in pursuance of the foregoing resolutions.

"For this purpose a meeting will be held at the New London Tavern, on Tuesday the 19th of April next. The chair will be taken by Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M. P. precisely at twelve o'clock. The attendance of persons friendly to the object is particularly requested.

"*Donations towards the proposed Society.*

	£.	s.	d.
Baptist Missionary Society, by the Rev. A. Fuller...	21	0	0
Penny Fund Society at Olney, by the Rev. J. Sutcliff	10	0	0
Rev. Andrew Fuller.....	5	5	0
Z. by Dr. Ryland.....	3	0	0
Mr. Saunders, Long Parish.....	2	0	0

Annual Subscriptions.

Miss Chapman, Lyme.....	2	0	0
Rev. John Dyer.....	1	0	0
— Thomas Griffin.....	1	0	0
— Joseph Ivimey.....	1	0	0
— William Newman.....	1	0	0
— William Shenstone... ..	1	0	0
— Thomas Smith.....	1	0	0
— Thomas Thomas.....	1	0	0
Mr. Gould, South Molton.....	1	0	0
— Chris. Hill, Scarborough.....	1	0	0

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Baptist Irish Society.

Thus encouraged to proceed, the public meeting was held, and in the Baptist Magazine for May, the formation of the Society is thus recorded—

“ Baptist Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland.

“ It is with pleasure we record the establishment of an institution which has for its object the emancipation of our fellow subjects in Ireland from superstitions little less degrading, and nearly equal in their influence with those of the Eastern continent.

“ At the meeting at the New London Tavern on the 19th of April (announced in our last number) Mr. Butterworth presided with his usual ability, and contributed essentially by his knowledge of the moral and religious state of Ireland to promote the purpose for which the meeting was convened.

“ Mr. Saffery of Salisbury stated, that this Society was founded upon the principle avowed by the Baptist Missionary Society, viz. ‘ As in the present divided state of christendom, it seems that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a mission,’ &c.

“ The addresses by the ministers and brethren, and the communications from the chair, produced a strong impression. Though the number present was not great, upwards of £120 was subscribed in the room; and the following resolutions were adopted:—

“ 1. That a Society be now formed and designated, “ The Baptist Society for promoting the gospel in Ireland, instituted in the year 1814.

“ 2. That the principal objects of this Society be to employ Itinerants in Ireland, to establish schools, and to distribute bibles and tracts, either gratuitously or at reduced prices.

“ 3. That any person, subscribing ten guineas at one time, be a governor of the society for life, and eligible to be on the committee.

“ 4. That any person subscribing one guinea annually shall be a governor, and eligible to be on the committee; or any person subscribing half a guinea annually, or five guineas at one time, shall have the privilege of voting at all its public meetings.

"5. That the concerns of the society be managed by a treasurer, a secretary, and a committee of twenty-seven governors. viz.

Chapman Barber	John Marshall
Anby Beatson	Thomas Mason
Gilbert Blight	Thomas Mitchell
Benjamin Chandler	William Napier
William Cuzens	John Penny
Edward Deane	Richard Pereira
Peter Ellis	Samuel Rixon
John Gale	Nathaniel Roberts
John Haddon	Richard Snell
Joseph Hanson	John Sweatman
Job Heath	John Wallis
Samuel Jackson	Samuel Watson
J. G. Kipps	

"6. That W. Burls, sen. Esq. be the treasurer for the present year.

"7. That the Rev. Joseph Ivimey be the secretary for the present year.

"8. That all ministers, who are subscribers, be at liberty to attend, and vote, at all meetings of the committee."

At a subsequent meeting of the committee it was resolved that "Mr. Ivimey, the secretary, and Mr. Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh, be requested to visit Ireland, for the purpose of meeting the associated Baptist Ministers at Dublin on the 28th of May. It is intended that these brethren, in connexion with our ministers in Ireland, shall select eight or more gentlemen resident in Ireland, as a corresponding committee, under whose inspection the itinerants will be employed."

The following letter from the Secretary of the Baptist Mission, to the Secretary of the Irish Society, will afford proof of Mr. Fuller's approbation of the proceedings.

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*Baptist Irish Society.**Extract of a Letter from Mr. Fuller to Mr. Ivimey.**Kettering, April 22, 1814.*

“ My dear Brother,

“ I have seen in the Instructor paper, the account of your meeting at the New London Tavern, on the 19th inst. to form a Society for promoting the Gospel in Ireland. It appears to have been well conducted. I have now only a few pieces of advice to offer.

“ Be more anxious to do the work than to get money. If the work be done, and modestly and faithfully reported, money will come. We have never had occasion to ask for money but once; namely, 1811, which was a very expensive year, and our funds were considerably more than exhausted; and then all that we said may be seen on the blue cover of the Baptist Periodical Accounts, No. XXI. which more than answered the end.

“ Further, be choice in the selection of itinerants. Your itinerants at present seem to be mostly Irish: and if they be of the right stamp, they are better than Englishmen. But when you are in Ireland (as I hope you will go) let it be your object to know your itinerants; itinerants, as well as those who direct their labours, should understand the Gospel, or their zeal will be like that of Ahimaaz. They should not only be men of heart, but of gentle, prudent, and ingratiating manners, and well affected to the constitution and government of their country.

“ Finally, be less eager as to doing much than doing it well. Begin on a small scale in every thing, and enlarge as God prospers your way. It was thus that God himself began both the Jewish and the Christian Church. Isa. li. 3. Matt. xiii. 3.

“ I was happy to find that the first contributions at your meeting were much beyond £13. 2s. 6d. with which we commenced! Money was one of the least of our concerns; we never doubted that if, by the good hand of our God upon us, we could do the work, the friends of Christ would support us.

“ Affectionately your's,

“ ANDREW FULLER.”

The Secretary, and the Rev. Christopher Anderson, of Edin-

burgh, accordingly visited Ireland, and spent most of their time in the Province of Connaught, as they wished to ascertain what was the state of the peasantry in regard to a want of education, and whether it would not be desirable to teach the Irish language. With the exception of a very few persons whom they consulted on that subject in Ireland, a most inveterate prejudice was found existing against the project, and objections urged, which it would be waste of paper to repeat.*

The following short statement was published in the Baptist Magazine for July, 1814.

“ Itinerant Society for Ireland.

“ This meeting was held at Mr. Upton’s Meeting house, Church Street, on Thursday evening, June 23, at six o’clock, and was numerously attended. After about an hour and a half spent in prayer, Mr. Ivimey gave a brief report of the late visit to Ireland by himself, and Mr. Christopher Anderson of Edinburgh. From this report, it appeared that though the difficulties attending the evangelization of Ireland may be many and great; yet there are hopeful appearances, that the clouds of dark superstition are breaking and dispersing; and that the beams of the Sun of Righteousness are shining with increasing brightness amidst the wide-spreading gloom that has long covered that unhappy part of the united kingdom. It is expected that the society will immediately employ three itinerants. Two are already engaged. Some serious men, it is thought, may be procured to read the Scriptures in the Irish language. The British and Foreign Bible Society have printed a portion of the New Testament in this language, but it is supposed not one person in ten thousand of the adults in Ireland can read it. To remedy their sad condition, it is proposed to establish Ambulatory, or Circulating Schools (upon the plan pursued with so much success in Wales, and in the Highlands of Scotland) for teaching the Irish language. The people are very

* Other particulars of this visit to Ireland may be seen in the Baptist Magazine for August, 1814, or in the First Annual Report of the Society.

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St. Giles's Irish Schools.

desirous of obtaining knowledge, and their attachment to their native tongue is so strong, that all the influence of the priests will not be sufficient to prevent them from getting their children taught to read it; and by it obtaining a knowledge of the Scriptures.

“The collection for this Society after this meeting, including annual subscriptions, amounted to 27*l*.”

Thus originated an institution which has been greatly honoured, in conveying scriptural instruction in the Irish language to great numbers of the long-neglected and superstitious aborigines of that popish country, and which has induced several other societies to adopt their plan of employing Irishmen as readers of the Scriptures in that language, without which, the adult population, to a very great extent indeed, never could have been instructed in the gospel way of salvation.

Towards the close of this year, an attempt was made to provide the destitute children of the Roman Catholics in St. Giles's with scriptural instruction. The plan of this school was suggested by a minister of the Baptist denomination, residing in the vicinity, who hired rooms in Baynbrigg Street, and employed an Irish schoolmaster to teach the poor children of a Sunday; the numbers were so great that attended, and so anxious were their parents to obtain instruction for them, that a week-day evening school was also opened.

Finding that this plan could be supported by Protestants of all denominations, the person referred to, a few weeks afterwards, applied to the late William Blair, Esq. a pious churchman. To him it was owing that the object soon obtained such encouragement, that some large premises were taken in St. George's Street. The following address was circulated:—

ST. GILES'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS,

*For the Instruction of Poor Irish Children, supported by
Voluntary Contributions.*

“*London. January. 1814.*”

“The neglected condition of the poor Irish children, of both sexes, in the metropolis of this united kingdom, demands the

sympathy and compassion of all his Majesty's subjects. On the 27th of June, 1813, a large school-room was opened for their instruction, under the superintendence of T. A. F. and his wife, Roman Catholics, and natives of Ireland: the condition on which the subscribers agreed to support this institution was, that no other books whatever shall be used for reading, besides the Holy Scriptures and the Spelling-book; the children being also at full liberty to attend what place of divine worship their parents prefer.

"The subscribers at first contemplated a Sunday School only; with, perhaps, an Evening School on the week-days; but the children, sent by their parents, were so eager to receive instruction, that the room was completely filled every day, from nine o'clock in the morning till nine at night. About two hundred scholars have been already admitted; and their number would be increased to four hundred, if the resources of this establishment were adequate to the expenditure. St. Giles's Catholic Schools, founded on the above principle, have now been tried with the most beneficial results; and it is hoped, therefore, they will hereafter secure the cordial patronage and co-operation of all the friends of humanity and true religion.

"The Committee have the satisfaction to report, that a very observable amendment has taken place in the morals of these destitute and ignorant children; and that they not only make a considerable progress in reading and writing, &c. but likewise commit to memory several portions, or even whole chapters, of the Scriptures. The good effects of these religious instructions are also witnessed among the parents; some of whom take pleasure in hearing the sacred volume perused by the children at home: so that there are many families now in St. Giles's where the New Testament is read to them by the children with serious attention, who, formerly, would not have admitted it within their doors. Indeed, about thirty families have lately subscribed to a fund for the purchase of the Bible for themselves.

"Such beneficial consequences encourage the committee to believe, that means will not be wanting to support these schools, and defray the increasing expenses; which are too great to be

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St. Giles's Irish Schools.

continued without further aid. The new school rooms (in George Street) have been commodiously fitted up, the girls being separated from the boys, at a heavy expense to the committee; who have, likewise, the rent, master's salary, price of furniture, stationery, and other pecuniary expenses, to discharge: and they are at present not only without any permanent funds, but a considerable sum is due to their treasurers.

"Should the benevolence of the British public afford them sufficient funds, the committee intend also to establish similar schools in other parts of the metropolis and its vicinity, where many of the poor Irish Catholics reside.

"N. B. Donations and annual Subscriptions will be received by the Joint-Treasurers, Sir Digby Mackworth, Bart. at his Banking-house, No. 189, Fleet-street; and by Thomas Clark, Esq. No. 1, Bury-place, Bloomsbury-square, or No. 44, Skinner-street; of whom the names of the present subscribers, and other particulars, may be obtained."

From the following, it will be seen, that a society was adopted for the support of the schools.

"Regulations of the Irish Catholic Schools, in George Street, St. Giles's, adopted by a General Meeting of Subscribers, held at the Freemason's Tavern, April 29, 1814.

"It appearing to this meeting, that the state of the children of the poor Irish resident in this metropolis, and the deficiency of their education, render it highly expedient that some effectual means should be adopted for the improvement of their morals, and affording them suitable instruction; it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED. That a Society be now formed for this purpose, and that the following code of regulations be adopted:—

"Regulations concerning the admission and teaching of the children—

"1. That the children of the Irish poor resident in this metropolis are the primary objects of this institution, for the purpose of being instructed in spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

"2. That every child admitted into the schools, shall have previously completed the fifth year of his or her age, and shall

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not continue more than six years, unless by the permission of the Committee.

“3. That the books to be used in the schools shall be the Bible, without note or comment, and a spelling book ; that no other book, pamphlet, or paper, shall be used in the schools for reading ; nor shall any creed, confession of faith, or catechism, be used or introduced therein.

“4. That the children be at full liberty to attend such place of worship as their parents prefer.”

From the third annual report of the society, read at a general meeting, held at Freemason's Tavern, the 19th of December, 1817, J. W. Warren, Esq. in the chair, it will be seen that the schools had by that time obtained extensive and powerful patronage.

PATRON,

The most Noble John, Duke of Bedford.

PRESIDENT,

Sir Digby Mackworth, Bart.

VICE-PRESIDENTS,

Joseph Butterworth, Esq. M. P.

Richard Blake Deverell, Esq.

Charles Grant Esq. M. P.

Major General Neville.

Sir Samuel Romilly, M. P.

Sir John Simeon, Bart. M. P.

Major General Sir Henry White, K. C. B.

William Wilberforce, Esq. M. P.

Three other schools upon a similar principle were founded for the children of Roman Catholics, in the Borough, White-chapel, and Westminster. Very large sums of money too were contributed by the public to relieve the distresses of the parents in three hard winters, with food and clothing. On one of these occasions, more than 1000*l.* were sent to the houses of five members of the Committee in about three days ; after which, to prevent a sum beyond what appeared to them to be necessary for the occasion, they published in the *Times* and other newspapers that they had enough.

1816.]

Marriage of the Princess Charlotte.

Her Royal Highness, the Princess Charlotte, having been married to the Prince of Saxe Coburg, the congratulatory addresses which follow were presented by the general body of Dissenting Ministers.

(Extract from the London Gazette, July 2, 1816.)

“TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES, REGENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

“May it please your Royal Highness.

“We, his Majesty’s dutiful and loyal subjects, the general body of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to approach your Royal Highness with cordial congratulations on the marriage of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte Augusta of Wales, with his Serene Highness the Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg.

“Highly valuing the numerous advantages, which this country has long enjoyed, under a succession of princes of the House of Brunswick, we take peculiar interest in this auspicious event.

“Permit us, Sir, to express our warmest wishes, that the alliance may be productive of permanent satisfaction to your Royal Highness.

“From the education of her Royal Highness, in principles adapted to give stability to a government, and prosperity to a nation, we confidently cherish the hope, that the true dignity of our country will be preserved by the wise and beneficial exercise of the same desire to promote the welfare of the people, and by the same sacred regard to the freedom of religious profession and worship, which have characterized the reign of our venerable Sovereign, and the administration of government by your Royal Highness.

“Influenced by these sentiments, we fervently offer our prayers to the King of kings for the continued health and happiness of your Royal Highness, and of those illustrious personages whose nuptials have called forth from his Majesty’s subjects such lively testimonies of approbation.”

Marriage of the Princess Charlotte.

[1816.]

To which address his Royal Highness was pleased to return the following most gracious answer :—

“ I thank you for this loyal and dutiful address.

“ I derive the utmost satisfaction from the persuasion, that the event which has occasioned this expression of your sentiments is equally calculated to promote the happiness of my family, and to afford additional security to the best and most important interests of the nation.

“ You may confidently rely upon the continuance of my favour and protection.”

The following address was afterwards presented to the Princess.

“ TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE
AUGUSTA OF WALES.

“ May it please your Royal Highness,

“ We, the general body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg leave to present to your Royal Highness our sincere gratulations on the event of your alliance with his Serene Highness Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, and to tender our warmest wishes for your truest felicity, through every succeeding period of your existence.

“ Descended from an illustrious line of royal ancestors, who have meritoriously and successfully laboured to advance the general improvement of the nation, and confirm our much valued liberties, we are persuaded, that your Royal Highness will derive the highest satisfaction from emulating such laudable examples.

“ Should your Royal Highness be ever called to fill the arduous and elevated situation of a Sovereign, we are confident that the conduct of your Royal Highness will evince the unceasing conviction, that a devoted attention to the intellectual and moral improvement of a cultivated and loyal people, will afford your Royal Highness more solid gratification, and confer more real splendour, than the outward ornaments of royalty.”

1817.]

To His Royal Highness Prince Leopold.

“ TO H. R. H. LEOPOLD GEORGE FREDERICK DUKE OF SAXE, MARGRAVE OF MEISSEN, LANDGRAVE OF THURINGUEN, PRINCE OF COBURG OF SAALFIELD, &c.

“ May it please your Serene Highness,

“ WE, the general body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster, have sincere pleasure in hailing the arrival of your Serene Highness in this kingdom on the present important occasion, and in presenting our warmest congratulations on your alliance with our amiable and illustrious Princess Charlotte Augusta.

“ From the elevated descent, various accomplishments, and excellent qualities of your Serene Highness, we are led to entertain the most pleasing expectation of the felicity attendant upon these auspicious nuptials.

“ It is our ardent wish, that this country may afford your Serene Highness facilities for every active, liberal, and beneficial pursuit, congenial to your taste and inclination.

“ In promoting the happiness of our beloved Princess, the country's hope, affording her kind and constant support on all occasions, conducive to her advantage, and aiding her benevolent designs for extensive usefulness, your Serene Highness will be entitled to the gratitude and affection of a free, enlightened, and loyal people.

“ Duly appreciating excellence, we rejoice to see it transplanted, naturalized, and flourishing in our land; and it is our wish and prayer, that your Serene Highness may enjoy, to a distant period, all the happiness which your exalted station can bestow.

“ (Signed on behalf of the general body.)”

To which addresses her Royal Highness and his Serene Highness were pleased to return the following answer:—

“ Be assured, that we receive the congratulations of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations with every cordial satisfaction and pleasure; and we are well assured

Bath Society for Aged Ministers.

[1817.]

in those fervent hopes they express for our mutual happiness, and for the prosperity of his Majesty's kingdoms."

In June 1816, a beneficiary society was formed at Bath, for the relief of superannuated Baptist ministers, who, from age and infirmity, are rendered permanently unable to exercise their office as pastors.

The principle of this institution is, that ministers, subscribing one guinea per year, become entitled, in the event of their being rendered incapable of filling longer the pastoral office by age or infirmity. A certain proportion of the annual income, arising either from subscriptions or donations, was to be funded, and the surplus divided among the claimants, until the annual income had reached one thousand pounds, when the whole should be equally divided.

The following congratulatory address was presented to his Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, on account of some outrages offered to his sacred person in St. James's Park, as he was going to open the Session of Parliament:—

(Extract from the London Gazette, March 11, 1817.)

TO H. R. H. GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES, REGENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, residing in and about the cities of London and Westminster, beg permission to approach your Royal Highness, to express our abhorrence of the atrocious outrages committed against your Royal Highness, when exercising one of the most important functions of your elevated office.

"As ministers of the peaceable and beneficent religion of our holy Redeemer, we feel ourselves bound publicly to declare our utter detestation of every act that tends to endanger the tranquillity of our country, the authority of the laws, and the stability of the constitution: and we are solicitous to express to your Royal Highness our deep conviction, that to promote the knowledge, and the sincere practice of that religion, to the advance-

1817.]

Address to the Prince Regent.

ment and diffusion of which we have consecrated our lives, will ever be found the most efficacious means of preventing political disorder, and of promoting the peace and happiness of all classes of the community, from the lowest to the most exalted.

“ His Majesty’s Protestant Dissenting subjects were among the earliest, and have always been among the most faithful adherents to your Royal Highness’s illustrious family. We are deeply sensible of the many blessings which our fathers, and ourselves, have enjoyed, under the Princes of the House of Brunswick; and we fervently pray, that the future glories of your Royal Highness’s government, and that of your descendants, may be signalized by the uninterrupted enjoyment of rational liberty, pure religion, and universal happiness.

“ (Signed, on behalf of the general body, by the deputation.)”

To which address his Royal Highness was pleased to return the following most gracious answer :—

“ I thank you for this loyal and dutiful address.

“ The sentiments which you have expressed, on the late fragrant violation of the laws, are highly satisfactory to me; and I rely with confidence on your earnest solicitude for the maintenance of the public tranquillity, and on your steady attachment to our invaluable constitution.”

About this period, some pious and respectable clergymen seceded from the established church, and avowed themselves Dissenters, voluntarily surrendering their livings, curacies, &c. They were at this time in general, in regard to doctrinal sentiments, disciples of Dr. Crisp; but afterwards for a time embraced the Sabellian or Arian schemes of divinity. Several of them renounced infant baptism, and were baptized on a personal profession of faith: they erected large chapels in Taunton, Bristol, Exeter, and London, and baptized many persons, among whom were some who were rich, who also had left the establishment. It is not my design to write the history of this secession, because it does not properly belong to a History of the English Baptists; none of them having united themselves with the denomination. The Rev. John Harrington Evans, of London, one

of these ministers, has published a retractation of the Sabellian sentiments which he had publicly defended by his preaching and writings, and is now a useful and much respected baptized minister ;—he has a baptistry in his chapel, in John Street, where many are baptized who join his society ; but he does not consider himself or his congregation as belonging to our denomination.

The year 1817, being the third centenary of the Reformation in Germany, at a meeting of the editors of the Baptist Magazine, at the beginning of December, it was thought desirable that a public commemoration of that event should take place.

It was in consequence of this conversation that one of the ministers present wrote the following address, which was sent to ministers and others in London, and this led to the formation of a committee, composed of Protestants, chiefly Dissenters.

THE REFORMATION.

“ Sir, the year eighteen hundred and seventeen happily has not yet passed away ;—happily, I say, because it is even yet within our power to save ourselves from an eternal disgrace, as a people, which all posterity will not fail to affix to our æra of existence, should we allow the Third Centenary of the Reformation to go unnoticed by public recognition. I will not state how much this mighty subject has of late occupied my own thoughts, and filled me with the most restless anxieties—I will not detail the resolutions I have formed, or the letters I have written, and as often abandoned, in despair of dissipating that indifference and apathy which seem to have involved our countrymen at this moment, as in the deep slumbers of the sepulchre—I will not say how often I had hoped and waited for some man of distinguished influence to start forth and lead the way to a glorious commemoration of one of the most important triumphs that was ever achieved by man over the domination of tyranny, the misrule of error, and the demon of religious intolerance—I will not even advert to a thousand other spirit-stirring considerations, which cannot fail of rushing into the mind at the first mention of that magic word—the Reformation ; but will

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simply and briefly appeal to the gratitude and the piety of my fellow-countrymen. as every man done his duty? Were it given to the spirits of the mighty dead—to Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zuinglius — to the spiritual heroes of the sixteenth century, to address us from their spheres of light, and to ask the question I have put, Has every man done his duty? Is there one of us whose crimson-stained countenance would not confess the share of our insensibility—the consciousness of our criminal listlessness? Methinks I hear the great chief of that holy confederacy, that so nobly fought the battles of the Lord Almighty, exclaiming, in the name of the rest, ‘Britons! have you of all the nations of the world, forgotten the sharp encounter we once sustained, to secure no less your emancipation from the slavery of error and the dominion of papal Rome, than that of Germany and of the world? Have not the joyful celebrations which have echoed of late through the forests of Thuringia reached your ears, or have they operated only to lull you into deeper repose? You, superior in arms, and arts, and commerce—in every thing that can embellish and ennoble life—you, to whom other nations are looking as examples, will you allow them to excel you in moral feeling, and the due expression of that feeling? Are they more indebted than you to the Reformation? Is religious liberty dearer to their hearts than yours? Do you send your Bibles to the ends of the earth, and cannot you consecrate one day to the memory of those who wrote, fought, bled, and burned in your cause? and will ye not adopt some commemorative measure, to exhibit your sentiments to the universe, and to awaken the zeal of your, at present, slumbering millions?’ Such, Sir, is the language which I seem to hear from the skies; and if any fail to verify this tone, which to me is not a whisper but a thunder, I can only say,

‘I hear a voice you cannot hear;’

and hear it in vain I will not. My address to you, Sir, is the proof that I will not; and if it fail of producing the excitement I desire, there will ever remain one consolation to my mind—I have done my duty—I have even ventured on a measure of publicity, from which I should otherwise have started back, but for

an irresistible impulse—I have ventured to incur, perhaps, the charge of presumption for my zeal; and I will wear it as a crown of honour. If this proposal be met with apathy, I can still recollect the animating couplet:—

‘ ’Tis not in mortals to ensure success :

But we’ll do more, Sempronius, we’ll deserve it.’

“The reader may, perhaps, demand my pretensions—my name he shall have. Had I no other claim to public notice than that of an individual, deeply interested in the work of the Reformation itself, I presume it would not be indecorous, at a time when almost the universal world feels upon the subject, and Britain seems indifferent, to attempt to rouse the public mind; but, besides this, I have given in my publication on the subject, in the life of one of the best of the renowned race of the reformers, a pledge of my feeling; and here I renew it with a warmth which, I trust, will not be chilled by the apathy and disregard of my compatriots.

“I am, yours, &c.

“F. A. COX.”

In consequence of this energetic address, a Meeting was held at the City of London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street, on Monday, December 15, 1817, when the following Resolutions were carried unanimously:—

“1. That the Reformation, which commenced Three Centuries ago, in the year 1517, deserves to be had in everlasting remembrance, as an event which introduced the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the vulgate languages of all nations, and emancipated millions of the human race from superstition and tyranny—as an event favourable to the diffusion of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and as an event which, by assisting civil and religious liberty, has promoted the intellectual and moral improvement of mankind.

“2. That at this period, and in the present situation of the world, it is highly desirable that all those of every political party, and of every religious denomination, who cherish the principles of the Reformation, and who, partaking its benefits, desire their diffusion, to express publicly the judgment they have

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formed, and the sentiments they feel: and that it is especially expedient that such public expression should occur during this year, which is the tri-centenary of this most memorable and important event.

“ 3. That a public meeting will afford an appropriate opportunity for such expression of their sentiments; and that Wednesday, December 30, being the day of the death of Wickliffe, our British Reformer, justly celebrated as the Morning Star of the Reformation, be the day on which such meeting shall assemble.

“ 4. That a Committee, composed of the reverend and other gentlemen now present, be formed, to make the necessary arrangements, and to carry the wishes of this meeting into effect, with power to add to their number.

“ 5. That this meeting cannot separate without recommending the imitation of their example to all friends of the Reformation throughout the united empire, at their earliest convenience, as the universality of the expression of these sentiments will increase their utility and effect.

“ 6. That these resolutions be published in the daily papers, under the direction of the committee.

“ (Signed,)

“ FRANCIS AUGUSTUS COX, CHAIRMAN.

“ Resolved unanimously—That this meeting cannot but express their acknowledgments to the Rev. F. A. Cox, for the opportunity he has afforded to them for expressing these sentiments, by his able and eloquent addresses to the public, and by his individual and disinterested convention of this meeting.”

A notice, of which the following is a copy, was a few days afterwards extensively circulated—“ A general meeting of Protestant Christians, of all denominations, will be held for the above purpose, at the City of London Tavern, on Wednesday next, the 30th of December, 1817, at eleven for twelve o'clock precisely, at which meeting his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex will preside.”

This most interesting meeting took place on the 30th of December, the date of Wickliffe's death, more than thirty years

before the birth of Luther. The Royal Duke took the chair, and more than 1000 persons were present, who, on listening to the speeches delivered, gave the liveliest demonstrations of delight.

The following are the resolutions passed unanimously:—

“ 1. That the right of every man to worship God according to his conscience, is a natural, unalienable right, anterior to all social institutions; which no human authority should ever presume to violate or restrict.

“ 2. That religion is not intended to aggrandize a peculiar class, nor to become an engine of state; but to inform the judgment, to purify the heart, to mitigate, by heavenly consolation, the calamities of life, and to inspire hopes of immortality, blissful and sublime.

“ 3. That such ‘pure and undefiled’ religion by the Holy Scriptures alone is taught; and that they therefore should be accessible in every language, to every individual of every nation on the globe; and that all attempts to limit such diffusion, oppose the beneficent purposes of God, and the best and only perfect happiness of man.

“ 4. That equally intrusive and unworthy are all efforts authoritatively to impose any expositions of those Holy Scriptures, which every man for himself is entitled to investigate, and to expound; and which every man should ‘read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.’

“ 5. That the experience of Europe from the third to the sixteenth century, has demonstrated that these great principles are as important in their practical operation, as, in theory, they are correct: and that to their violation are mainly attributable those multitudinous ills, which, for that long period, afflicted humanity, deformed the Christian faith, and oppressed the world.

“ 6. That this meeting could not enumerate all those evils which flowed from that abundant source—but that the Scriptures were forbidden:—that their sacred truths were displaced by corrupt traditions; and simple, true, and spiritual worship, by superstitious forms:—that crusades were substituted for the peace-announcing gospel, ignorance for knowledge, and persecution for good-will to men:—that priests, operating by their

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dogmas on the fears and on the hopes of the deluded and untaught, exclusively amassed both wealth and power:—that absolutions and indulgencies, purchasable from them, encouraged crimes:—that admission even into heaven was made dependant on their dear-bought masses, and their prayers:—that the people groaned in wretchedness, and that monarchs trembled on their thrones:—and that a domination, interested, arbitrary, and injurious, extended over the fortunes, the intellect, and consciences of men.

“ 7. That, afflicted at the retrospect of evils so much to be deplored, this meeting delight to trace even those gleams of moral light, which in the fourteenth century partially dissipated a gloom so oppressive and profound; and that the memories of Wickliffe, of Jerome, and Huss, and of the Waldenses, are enshrined within their hearts.

“ 8. But that it is the peculiar and important object of this meeting to celebrate, at this tri-centennial period, that glorious Reformation which, in 1517, commenced in Saxony; which exchanged knowledge for ignorance, freedom for oppression, and a purer Christianity for corruptions, anti-christian and absurd.

“ 9. That the Reformation having promoted the recognition of the great principles which this meeting maintain, has (aided by the art of printing) emancipated many nations from such superstitions and tyranny; has bestowed on the people constitutional freedom, and restored to magistrates lawful authority; has burst asunder the fetters which enchained the human mind; has ameliorated the destiny even of those countries which have not yet yielded to its influence; and has contributed to that improvement in social happiness at which this meeting can rejoice: although society may not yet have attained that state which piety must admire and philanthropy approve.

“ 10. That, without conferring any excessive praise on Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Calvin, and the band of brethren who originated and promoted this beneficent event, and without applauding all their conduct, or all the doctrines which they taught, this meeting must regard them as great among the greatest of mankind; must recollect with astonishment and admiration their talents, their industry, their zeal; and must

recommend to their children, and their children's children, an imitation of their dauntless courage, their steady perseverance, and that unintimidable obedience to the dictates of their consciences which they nobly displayed.

“ 11. That, whilst this meeting render cordial homage to the memory of illustrious men, who were the ornaments of other countries, they never can forget those men of great and kindred minds, who, in their native land, amidst darkness, obloquy, proscription, and death, proclaimed the same great truths, and by whom equal triumphs were obtained; and that to the wondrous and intrepid Knox, in Scotland; to Tyndale, Latimer, and the holy martyrs and confessors of the English church, they would thus rear a monument on which they would record their veneration and esteem.

“ 12. That this meeting are exhilarated by intelligence, that during this tri-centennial year, similar sentiments have been expressed by the Protestants who cultivate those German plains where the Reformation so happily began; and learn with joy, that approximating towards each other with liberal and enlightened minds, they are adding dignity to the common cause of the reformed, and are preparing its further successes by their augmented union, and well-regulated zeal.

“ 13. That this meeting, convinced that the principles of the reformation promote individual happiness and social peace, nurture inquiry, and bless mankind, exhort those great nations, who in Europe and America profess a congenial faith, to cherish those principles with an unabated ardour, appropriate to their worth; to transmit them with hallowed reverence to their posterity, and to protect those who also cherish them in other countries from all persecuting powers: and that such attention they now especially invite, when monastic institutions are restored, when dangerous societies are revived, when the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, without note or comment, is forbidden, and when inquisitions are continued and re-established, to perpetuate the empire of delusion, by imprisonment, by torture, and by death.

“ 14. That, amidst their own security and satisfaction, this meeting feel the deepest interest for those smaller and less

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protected communities, who, amidst the villages of Piedmont, in the kingdom of France, or throughout the earth, exist in nations generally hostile to their faith; and that to them this meeting would address assurances of the kindest sympathy, and of fraternal love.

“ 15. That whilst this meeting thus celebrate the Reformation, whose influence they desire should be co-extensive with the globe, they seek for the extension only by the energy of argument, and through the force of truth; and towards those Catholics whose errors they regret, and whose principles they disapprove, they disclaim all sentiments which Christian charity could censure, or religious freedom would condemn.

“ 16. That this meeting cannot but cordially express pre-eminent delight that his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex has condescended to preside upon this great occasion; nor can they but announce their unaffected joy, that he has thus demonstrated that his Royal House remain firmly attached to the great principles established by the Reformation, and to that Protestant faith which their ancestors therefore long and strenuously maintained; and upon which they were called to the throne of these realms.

“ 17. That these resolutions be printed, and advertized in the principal papers and publications in Great Britain, Ireland, America, and on the Continent of Europe, at the discretion of the Committee.”

The thanks of the meeting were also returned to the Rev. F. A. Cox, of Hackney; with whom, and some of his friends, the proposal for the commemoration originated. *

On the 6th of November, 1817, the death of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, the only child of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, furnished an occasion for the Protestant Dissenters, of each denomination, to testify their grief and loyalty. An unprecedented number of sermons, several of them by Baptist Ministers, were published on this truly affecting instance of mortality.

* These Resolutions were written by John Wilks, Esq. Secretary of the Protestant Society.

An extraordinary general meeting of the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters was held on December 9, 1817, to consider the best mode of expressing their sentiments of condolence on the occasion of the lamented death of the Princess Charlotte Augusta of Wales. At this meeting, which was numerously attended, the Rev. Dr. John Rippon was called to the chair. The expressions of affection and deep regret to the memory of the princess were strong and universal: these were heightened by the recollections of the gracious and condescending manner in which her Royal Highness had received the deputation after her marriage; and from its having been understood, that both at the time, and afterwards, the princess had signified, how much she was gratified at the token of respect paid her by the Dissenting ministers.

The following are the resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the meeting, and ordered to be printed in the public papers:

“That having so recently been admitted into the presence of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to offer our congratulations on the auspicious nuptials of his Royal daughter, and his Serene Highness Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, and having had the honour of personally addressing the illustrious and happy pair on the same event, we cannot but feel most powerfully the sad reverse of circumstances, occasioned by the lamented death of the Princess Charlotte and her son.

“That though we deem it most expedient and respectful to abstain from such communications of our condolence on the mournful occasion, as might revive the painful sensations which must have agitated the minds of her Royal parents and his Serene Highness Prince Leopold; we do, nevertheless, consider it our duty, as a body, to testify our deep sense of the great loss which the nation has sustained by that afflictive event.

“That, from the talents and acquirements of her Royal Highness, from her attachment to those principles of true freedom, civil and religious, which have been the bases of our country’s felicity and glory, from the countenance which her public conduct and domestic virtues afforded to the interests of good morals

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Address to the Prince Regent from Derby.

and the exercises of devotion and piety, and from her courteous and condescending manners, we were led to anticipate, in common with the country at large, extensive blessings to the community under her rule, if she had lived to fill the throne of this United Kingdom.

"That the Almighty having been pleased, in the course of his providence, to disappoint our sanguine hopes, by removing her, we trust, to a better world, we bow in humble submission beneath his chastening rod, and hope, and pray, that the universal Sovereign will cause good to arise out of this national affliction, and that he may still continue to be 'a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst' of our land.

" (Signed)

"JOHN RIPPON, CHAIRMAN."

Great disturbances having prevailed in the north, and some persons having been executed for high treason, the Dissenters in the town of Derby presented an address to the Prince Regent: the following account gives its history.

On Monday, Dec. 1, 1817, a very interesting meeting was held in the Town Hall of Derby. It consisted of the ministers and members of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist congregations in Derby, and was called "to take into consideration the propriety of presenting an address to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent on the late melancholy and lamented death of her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and of dutiful and loyal attachment to the principles which placed the illustrious family of his Royal Highness on the throne of these realms."

TO H. R. H. GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES, REGENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, the undersigned, the ministers of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist denominations of Protestant Dissenters in Derby, on behalf of ourselves and the members of our respective congregations, approach your Royal Highness with feelings of dutiful and loyal attachment and of unfeigned sympathy.

Address to the Prince Regent from Derby.

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“It would be vain to attempt the expression of that sorrow which fills our heart at the recollections of the irreparable loss which your Royal Highness has been called to sustain. That heavenly Providence which rules over all, and whose wisdom we can neither fathom nor arraign, has removed from the world your illustrious daughter; and at a time, and under circumstances, which, to human apprehension, rendered her continuance here the most to be desired.

“To dwell on the virtuous and amiable character of her Royal Highness, would be only to repeat the praises which fall from every tongue; and we fear to dwell on the subject, which in the poignancy of your Royal Highness’s affliction, might tend rather to renew your sorrows than to alleviate them. If effectual consolation were in our power, it would be our greatest happiness to open every source of it to your Royal Highness; but He alone can bind up the heart who has broken it, and to the source of all good, whose ways, though mysterious, are always merciful, our prayers are addressed, that he will grant such portions of his all powerful aid as may support your Royal Highness under this awful dispensation of his power.

“We trust also, that your Royal Highness will derive some alleviation of your grief, from the assurance of the affectionate and loyal attachment which pervades all ranks of people in these United Kingdoms.

“We offer it to the consideration of your Royal Highness as a source of no mean satisfaction, that a spirit of union and loyalty exists among the people of these realms which cannot be exceeded, and that every attempt to disturb the tranquillity of the empire has proved abortive.

“Addressing your Royal Highness from a county which has been represented (unjustly as we believe) to be disaffected to the government of your Royal Highness, we have the highest pleasure in congratulating your Royal Highness on the very decisive testimony which was repeatedly borne by the judges on the bench during the late trials for high treason, to the steady loyalty of the people at large, a loyalty which no intimidation could for a moment shake.

“It was with infinite regret that we observed occasional state-

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Society for the Relief of Aged Ministers.

ments of the transactions which have disturbed our country, in which it was attempted to implicate the Dissenters in the recent outrages. That undeviating fidelity which the Protestant Dissenters have ever exhibited to the illustrious family of your Royal Highness, ought to have been sufficient to secure them as a body from such unfounded insinuations. And on mature inquiry, we have a confident satisfaction in assuring your Royal Highness, that not an individual connected with any religious society of the three denominations of dissenters was in any degree implicated in the disgraceful occurrences so promptly and so happily suppressed.

“In veneration of those principles of civil and religious liberty which we have ever been foremost to avow—principles which seated and maintain the family of your Royal Highness on the throne of these United Kingdoms—and in zealous attachment to the venerated institutions of our country as secured by our invaluable constitution, we trust we shall steadily persevere.

“To defend the land of our birth against foreign aggression, its tranquillity against the efforts of faction, its institutions against the encroachments of power, are our duties as patriots; to yield a ready submission to the laws and constituted authorities of the state, is the first lesson which we learn as subjects; to embrace every fit opportunity of expressing our dutiful attachment to our Sovereign and his family, is our privilege as Britons. In these characters we now address your Royal Highness, beseeching your Royal Highness to receive our professions of loyalty and affection, and our assurances that your Royal Highness will ever find us among the most faithful of his Majesty’s subjects.”*

The Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers was formed at a General Meeting, held at the King’s Head, in the Poultry, June 2, 1818. John Gurney, Esq. in the Chair.

* This Address (written by the Rev. C. E. Birt, at that time pastor of the Baptist Church in Derby) was well received by his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.

Death of the Duke of Kent.

[1820.]

The following resolutions were passed unanimously :—

“ That a society be formed for the relief of Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations, Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist, in necessitous circumstances, and that the title of the society be, ‘ A Society for the Relief of the Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers.’ ”

“ That the objects of this institution be Protestant Dissenting Ministers, accepted and approved in their respective denominations, who are incapacitated by age or other infirmities.”

In the year 1784 a society called “ The Baptist Case Committee ” had been formed in London, to afford pecuniary aid towards poor Baptist churches in the country, in building and repairing meeting houses. For many years, three and four cases had been named annually, but without much regularity.

In June 1818, a meeting was held to consider how greater efficiency could be given to such applications by the trust deed of the meeting houses being previously examined, &c. The annual report was laid before a general meeting in the midsummer week, when some new regulations were adopted, and it was agreed on account of the great number of approved cases which had accumulated on the hands of the committee, that in future a case should be admitted to be collected for every month in London. This was accordingly done, till the establishment of the “ London Building Fund,” for the same object, two or three years ago.

The year 1820 was most eventful in regard to the Royal family. In the month of January, his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent was suddenly removed by death. As a proof of the high estimation in which this noble and liberal-minded Prince was held by the Protestant Dissenters, the following resolutions, passed at Dr. Williams’s Library, are recorded :—

“ 1. That this body, deeply affected by the irreparable loss which the cause of truth and humanity has suffered in the recent death of his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, cannot deny themselves the melancholy satisfaction of thus publicly expressing their grief on an event which has taken from the

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Resolutions of the General Body.

royal family one of its brightest ornaments, and from the nation one of its best hopes.

“2. That whilst the character of the illustrious deceased commanded the esteem of men in all ranks, and of all religious persuasions, his Royal Highness was endeared, in an especial manner, to Protestant Dissenters, by the enlarged opinions which he entertained and avowed on the subject of religious freedom, and by the cordial support which, in connection with his illustrious brother the Duke of Sussex, he was ever ready to give to those charitable establishments in which Dissenters were chiefly interested. That this body admired, above all, the ardour with which he espoused, and the diligence with which he promoted, that comprehensive plan for the education of the poor which his royal father had sanctioned with his approbation, and which is not confined to classes or sects, but adapted to the general exigencies of human nature, and to the general improvement of rational and immortal beings.

“3. That this body, partaking of the same catholic spirit, and anxious for its wider diffusion, look back, with a mingled sentiment of pleasure and regret, to those public meetings at which it was so beautifully exhibited in the benevolent countenance, and so powerfully recommended by the appropriate and winning eloquence, of a king's son. That under this impression they cannot but feelingly lament, that a prince so greatly honoured and so deservedly beloved by the wise and good, and who in thinking for himself had risen superior to all partial interests, and become the enlightened advocate of all liberal views and all useful institutions, has been withdrawn so soon, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, from labours of love, as pleasing to himself as they were important to the best interests of mankind.

“4. That, painful as this dispensation is, the body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers bow in humble acquiescence before Him who giveth, and who taketh away; and their resignation is rendered the more cheerful by the assurance, that such an example as that which has been left by the Duke of Kent cannot be lost to the world;—that it will continue to be remembered, admired, and imitated, especially among the great; and that not

Funeral Sermon for the Duke of Kent.

[1820.]

this age only, but a grateful posterity, will have reason to say of him, ‘Though dead he yet speaketh.’

“ 5. That, in thus testifying our grief, the members of this body are desirous, at the same time, of expressing their heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolence with the illustrious and amiable Princess so unexpectedly bereaved of a husband, who was as remarkable for tenderness and affection in his private relation, as he was distinguished in his public capacity for every princely quality, and every social virtue : and it is their fervent prayer to Almighty God, that he will preserve to her Royal Highness that pledge of love which her honoured consort has left her, and all those attentions of fraternal kindness which are so needful and so precious to the widowed heart.”

From a sermon published by the writer of this history on this lamented occasion, an extract is given :—

“ Such has been the scene witnessed at Sidmouth, during the last week, when his Royal Highness, Edward Duke of Kent, &c. was brought to what may be called a premature death, and an untimely grave. Judging from his majestic person, his firm constitution, his sober habits, his being inured to different climates, and the hardships inseparable from a soldier’s life, we should not have expected that a little snow-water penetrating his boots would convey the mortal poison to his heart. The royal sufferer did not expect it. When he felt the symptoms of a cold, it is reported that he said, ‘A good night’s rest will remove all this.’ But his time was come to die, and therefore the poison could not be expelled from the system, and he fell before the angel of death. Yes, that noble-minded prince is no more. He is no more, who was foremost in patronising our benevolent institutions, especially those for the universal circulation of the Bible, and for the instruction, the scriptural instruction, of the rising generation ;—he, who, rising above the clouds of prejudice, suffered no religious distinctions to impede the march of his philanthropy ;—he, who nobly dared to break down the middle wall of partition between Episcopalians and Dissenters, and received them without distinction to his friendship and his influence :—he, who was ever ready to advocate the

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Funeral Sermon for the Duke of Kent.

cause of the poor and needy, and to use his powerful exertions to carry into effect the patriotic and godlike desire of his royal parent, 'I wish that every child in my dominions may be able to read the Bible.' On several occasions I have heard the late prince declare the correctness of the above statement, and his knowledge of the zeal which had been expressed by his Majesty to promote the welfare of the society which contemplated the education of every class of his subjects. Methinks I now see his majestic countenance beaming with affability and kindness towards the children of the poor—the picture of our now departed and lamented monarch, the family portrait of the House of Brunswick, the resemblance of the ancient Romans;—but I forbear. I am reminded by my text not to speak too highly, even of princes; 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.'

"Yet it is not wrong for us, surely, to mourn the death of a great and lamented benefactor, and to express our respect for the memory of a distinguished friend and patron; of a prince, whose knowledge of the genuine principles of the British constitution led him, while he maintained the just prerogatives of the crown, to advocate the constitutional rights of the people; whose regard for the principles of civil and religious liberty induced him, while expressing his veneration for the established church, to rejoice in the toleration afforded by law to all classes of Dissenters, and to plead for the most entire freedom from pains and penalties, on account of religious opinions. Such sentiments publicly and constantly expressed by a member of the royal family, must have produced an extensive influence in checking the ebullitions of bigotry and intolerance. There can be no doubt, too, that his example in promoting religious and benevolent institutions has, in no small degree, increased that spirit of liberality which marks the present period of our history. Seldom have the talents and eloquence of the late Duke been equalled by persons of noble rank; nor, in my opinion, have they been at any time exceeded, except, perhaps, in the instance of one of his royal brothers. All the princes of the

House of Brunswick have been distinguished by a regard for our popular rights; but it was reserved till the present era for princes to be seen standing upon the same platform with the people, and leading them on in the paths of patriotism and learning. While reflecting upon the death of such a patron and protector, I am inclined to adopt the impassioned exclamation of David in his elegy on the death of Abner, who, like the prince whom we lament, was a noble soldier and a distinguished patriot, ‘Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?’” 2 Sam. iii. 38.

The death of his Majesty, George III. in February, 1820, drew forth the nation’s tears, and from none more than the Protestant Dissenters. Many sermons were preached on the occasion, and some of them were published. From one of these, by the writer, entitled, “The Retrospect, or an Attempt to sketch the prominent Features of the religious Character of his late revered Majesty, George III.” the following quotation is given, as inserted in a review of that sermon, in the Baptist Magazine for April, 1820.

‘We think his transition from David to Solomon—from the last reign to the present, peculiarly happy. The conclusion of the sermon is worth transcribing.

“The closing sentence in the text, which I have not yet noticed, was perhaps intended as another consideration to support the minds of the people of Israel under their loss. ‘And David died in a good old age, full of days, and riches, and honours, and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.’ The same letter which announces the death of one monarch, proclaims the accession of another; so closely allied are our afflictions and deliverances. Thus have the newspapers of the last fortnight communicated information both painful and pleasing. The gazette commences with the declaration of the lamented demise of George III. ‘On Saturday afternoon, at thirty-five minutes past eight o’clock, our late most gracious sovereign, King George the Third, whose strength had gradually declined for some weeks, expired, without the least apparent suffering, at his castle at

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Funeral Sermon for George the Third.

Windsor, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the sixtieth year of his reign.' And the same gazette concludes with loyal protestations of allegiance to George IV. 'To whom we do acknowledge all faith and constant obedience with all hearty and humble affection; beseeching God, by whom all kings and queens do reign, to bless the royal prince, George the Fourth, with long and happy years to reign over us.'

"Thus has God in mercy given us another prince of the royal House of Brunswick;—a prince who, like his royal father, was born and educated in our own country and who, like him, glories in the name of Briton;—a prince, who has for several years past directed the measures of government, and who has had the honour of putting an end to the miseries of a protracted and destructive war;—a prince who understands and reveres the principles of the British constitution, and who has taken the earliest opportunity of uttering the most noble sentiments. In his declaration in council, on his accession to the throne, his Majesty says, 'The experience of the past will, I trust, satisfy all classes of my people, that it will ever be my most anxious endeavour to promote their prosperity and happiness, and to maintain unimpaired, the religion, laws, and liberties of the kingdom.'

"The reign of our late monarch has, in one respect, very much resembled that of David; it has been a period of tumult and of war. May the reign of our present king be like that of Solomon, distinguished as an era of peace and great prosperity! It is said, that at the coronation of David's son, all the people said, 'God save king Solomon.' With similar feelings, I am persuaded, the people of England will say, 'God save king George.'—'Give the king thy judgments, O God!' Methinks I hear the departed spirit of our late monarch adopt the charge of David to Solomon, saying, 'And thou, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

"O that He, by whom kings reign, may bestow upon our monarch 'a spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of

counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord!’ Will you not say, Amen? A loyal Israelite exclaimed, ‘The Lord God of my lord, the king, say so too. As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David,’ 1 Kings i. 36, 37. In concluding this discourse, I most earnestly and affectionately request, that you will unite with me in returning thanks to the Father of mercies, for having restored His Majesty from a severe and alarming affliction;—and in praying that his reign may be long, prosperous, and happy; that his authority and his royal example may be productive of the most beneficial effects, in working a great reformation among the higher and lower ranks of the community; that every princely virtue and grace may dwell in his heart and shine through his actions; that the divine benediction may rest upon him, and all the members of the royal house; and, finally, that through the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit, and the merits of an all-sufficient Saviour, he may be exalted to a throne of eternal glory. May a long succession of heirs, descended from the illustrious House of Brunswick, continue to sit upon the throne of Great Britain, to maintain Protestantism and liberty, to encourage virtue and religion, and thus to promote the kingdom of our blessed Redeemer from age to age, till time shall be no more! Amen.”

Having thus brought the History of the English Baptists to the close of the reign of his late Majesty, and noticed some of the principal events in reference to the general body of Protestant Dissenters, of the three denominations, in London and Westminster, of which they form a constituent part; I shall proceed, in the next section, to finish what, in the last volume, was, from want of room, left imperfect—a History of the Baptist Churches in London to the same period.

BOOK II.

HISTORY OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN LONDON,

CONTINUED FROM THE LAST VOLUME.

PAUL'S ALLEY, BARBICAN.

THE church meeting in this place was, it is probable, founded at an early period of the civil wars. There is mention made in its records, of one of the members who died in 1729, at the age of ninety-six, who had belonged to it for about seventy-six years. This statement carries us back to the year 1653, when it is likely Mr. John Gosnold was its pastor, who held in connection with it some parochial charge, as he was ejected from a parish living in 1660, soon after the restoration of Charles the Second.

The congregation in Paul's Alley, it is said, amounted to 3000 persons. Mr. Gosnold was a very popular orthodox minister, and died October 3, 1678.

Mr. Thomas Plant succeeded him, and was also very popular and greatly suffered from persecution. He died about 1693.

Mr. Richard Allen was the next pastor, who brought with him a small congregation from a church in Turner's Hall, whose history is given in the last volume, from page 348—355. With the union of these two churches, the records of the church begin. From these it appears, that a Mr. James Pitman and Mr. Allen were to be the pastors; it is added, "and that Mr. Joseph Stennett be continued in the ministry thereof."*

The public recognition of the Union took place on June 12, 1695. Two sermons were preached on the occasion by Mr. Stennett and Mr. Maisters; Messrs. Williams, Collins, John Piggott, and Joseph Taylor, engaged in prayer.

* This eminent minister was a Sabbatarian Baptist, but preached at Paul's Alley on one part of the Lord's Day.

The church in Barbican was thus continued under the care of orthodox ministers of great respectability. It had not yet united itself to any association of General or Particular Baptists : it did not choose to be recognized as being either Arminian or Calvinist. Its ministers held opinions which agreed with some parts of both those creeds, and were in the habit of preaching with acceptance to congregations of both denominations. In a letter of Mr. Benjamin Stinton, referred to in the events of the year 1717, in our last volume, it is said, " There are churches about London, whose members are partly of one opinion in these points, and partly of another, and who likewise desire, and frequently have, ministers who go under both of these characters to preach to them ; and choose their pastors, sometimes from one of the denominations, and sometimes from the other, as the church of Barbican," &c.

This laxity, however, respecting doctrinal sentiments, was not for the peace or prosperity of the church. I find that Mr. Joseph Stennett received a message from the church, April 4, 1700, informing him that several brethren were dissatisfied with him for having preached on the controverted points between the Remonstrants and Calvinists, and that the church expected he would promise not to preach on those controversies in future :—also, that the church had been informed he had preached at Lorimer's Hall, and had thereby abetted a schism in the church in White Street, Moorfields, and they expected he would desist from preaching there in future.

This truly great man, by his reply, intimated that he had not preached on the subjects complained of without design : and that he evidently perceived it was the doctrines which they objected to, under a specious pretence of a dislike to controversial preaching. He therefore sent for answer, " That the doctrines he had preached of late, were the same with those which he had formerly preached among them without offence ; but that of late he had thought he had more occasion than formerly to preach on those controversial points, and therefore he could not promise he would not preach on them in future. And as to his having preached at Lorimer's Hall, he did not know it was an occasion of offence to any, for though their coming off was in

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Mr. Joseph Stennett.

an irregular manner, and he had used many arguments with them to acknowledge their irregularity, yet as they were now set down together as a church, and there was no ground to expect they would return, made him the more free to preach among them." The church, very much dissatisfied with his answer, adopted the following resolution:—"But yet, nevertheless, this church will so far adhere to that excellent grace of charity as may be consistent with christian prudence for her own safety; and therefore passes by what is past in relation to brother Stennett, and is willing to continue him to preach among us, provided he will yet promise to forbear preaching up those controversies between the Remonstrants and Calvinists, which hath been found destructive to many churches."

To this requisition Mr. Stennett refused a compliance; and, on account of his Calvinistic opinions, he was respectfully dismissed from his situation as their minister, about May, 1700.

The subsequent history of this church will shew the progress of error, and its fatal influence on one of the largest churches in the city. This consideration will, it is hoped, be deemed sufficient; to go more into detail would be otherwise not justifiable. The church in Barbican is one of the monuments on the ruins of which is written for our information, "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

At the close of this year the church was again agitated by the discussion of doctrinal sentiments. One of the members had used frequently erroneous expressions concerning the Lord Jesus Christ; this was acknowledged by the accused party, who said, "He should continue to do the same, for if he were to desist he should think he sinned against his conscience." The following extract from the church book is edifying:—

"Barbican, January 14, 1700.

"Brother Allen reported from the brethren appointed to discourse and bring in a further charge against brother Shelswell, that they had discoursed him, and finding him still persist in his errors, brought in the following charge against him, *viz.* Brother John Shelswell is charged with not only holding, but

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[1701.]

zealously propagating, the following errors, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and the received principles of this church, to the great scandal and offence thereof, viz.

‘1. Denying the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (and of the Holy Spirit, (or that they are of the same divine nature with the Father,) and affirming them to be only creatures.

‘2. Denying the existence of our Redeemer before his incarnation, affirming he had no actual or personal being till he was conceived in the womb of the virgin.

‘3. Denying the doctrines of the blessed Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead, as generally received by christians.

‘4. Frequently showing an unbecoming and irreverend behaviour in public worship, when Divine glory has been ascribed to the Son and the Holy Spirit, together with the Father.’

“Brother Shelswell declining to give a positive answer, but distributing some printed papers, he was ordered to have a copy of his charge, and to answer next church meeting but one.—He being withdrawn, questions founded upon the before-mentioned charges were severally put, and they were all severally agreed (*nemini contradicente*) to be errors, and contrary to the Scriptures and the received principles of this church.”

The records further state, “At a church meeting, February 27, 1701, the charge against brother John Shelswell being read before him, he pulled out a paper, which he said was an answer to his charge, and being asked, Whether it would lead into the controversy? he answered, No; and therefore it was admitted to be read; and in the preface thereof, there being this expression, ‘That he would make it appear, by the word of God, that what we called errors are the great truths of the gospel:’—which appearing plainly to lead into the controversy of the errors charged on him, and not to be a direct answer to the charge, it was objected against his reading the paper; and he, refusing to give any direct answer, was desired to withdraw.

“And being withdrawn, and the matter being fully debated, the question was put—Whether brother John Shelswell should be admitted to read his said paper, and carried in the negative. Agreed, (*nemini contradicente*,) That brother Shelswell be required

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to give a direct answer to the charge. And he, being called in, was told that the church would not admit him to read his paper, but required him to give a direct answer to the said charge. And the first article of the charge being read, he made some evasion about the terms there used. But being asked, Whether he believed that Jesus Christ is God from eternity? He declared, that he did not believe that Jesus Christ, that was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, is God from eternity; and then departed, refusing to give any direct answer: whereupon it was resolved, That brother John Shelswell continue suspended from his communion with this church."

It is pleasing to observe the zeal manifested by the majority of the church, under the direction of their worthy pastor, Mr. Allen, in removing from their communion this Socinian member. Having ascertained that he had imbibed errors contrary to the Scriptures, and had rejected the received principles of the church, they acted with great promptitude, according to the direction of the apostle, Titus iii. 10. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." The language of the apostle, addressed to the church at Corinth, was at this period applicable to the church at Barbican. "What carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

In the year 1706 this church united with the association of Particular Baptist churches. The following letter was sent upon that occasion:—

"To the Elders and other Representatives of the Associate Churches, appointed to meet at Joiner's Hall on the 25th instant.

"The church of Christ, meeting in Barbican, under the care of Mr. Richard Allen, sends greeting in our Lord Jesus Christ—

"Brethren in our Lord,

"We, being informed of your good and pious ends in your association, and being persuaded the same may tend to the honour of God and the advancement of religion, sent deputies

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[1717.]

to your previous meeting, the 18th instant, to acquaint you with our inclination to unite and associate with you in so good a work. And you, having unanimously agreed to admit us into the same, we have (*nemini contradicente*) agreed thereto, and hereby signify the same to you.

“ And do appoint our much-esteemed and well-beloved brethren, brother Richard Allen, our pastor, and brother Abraham Hickman, and brother John Blunt, to represent us in the said association.

“ So, recommending you to God, and the Word of his grace, with our prayers for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in your consultations, we remain, your truly affectionate brethren.

“ From our church meeting in Barbican, March 24, 1705.”

The circular letter, and the various resolutions agreed upon by the assembly, were discussed separately at the church meeting, and all agreed to with the most perfect unanimity.

Mr. Allen continued the pastor of the church until his death, in February, 1716-7. He had been assisted after the removal of Mr. Joseph Stennett, in 1700, by Dr. John Gale, and afterwards by Mr. Joseph Burroughs,

‘ Mr. Joseph Burroughs. He became a member of this church in 1712, having joined it, with twenty-four others, who had been members of the church in Virginia Street. It appears he had been called to the ministry before this period; but in 1713, the church in Paul’s Alley requested him to undertake the office of joint-pastor with Mr. Allen: this he respectfully declined, but in 1717, he was set apart publicly, as has been mentioned in the events of that year, to the pastoral office. At this period, the church, it is believed, consisted of about two hundred and twenty members.*

This worthy man was born January 1, 1684-5, of religious parents: he was the son of a Mr. Humphrey Burroughs, who has been mentioned as a deacon of the church in Virginia Street. His father was a very pious man, and a respectable weaver in

* This calculation has been made from the names of the members as entered in the church book.

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Mr. Joseph Burroughs.

Spitalfields, who, by the blessing of God upon his industry, had risen to considerable affluence. He gave his son a very liberal education : sending him first to Dr. Carr's academy at Highgate, and afterwards to Leyden, in Holland, one of the most eminent of the foreign universities : here he made such a progress in many different branches of knowledge as entitled him to great distinction in the literary world.

At a very early period, he had resolved to devote himself to the work of the ministry among the Baptists—a proof of the devotional state of his mind, as his connections and circumstances were such, that he might have followed a less laborious and more lucrative employment.

He always appeared to delight in his work, and discharged it in a way which proved that he derived his chief pleasure from conveying scriptural knowledge to the minds of his hearers : he considered every thing was of real importance that tended to illustrate any part of the sacred oracles. His zeal was not spent upon speculative notions, but upon those subjects which he considered the most efficacious to rectify the hearts and the lives of mankind : the practical duties of piety, charity, and inward purity were his favourite topics, and these were enforced by his own example.

“He was,” says his biographer, “a zealous advocate for the importance of the christian revelation, which he justly esteemed as the highest blessing which the providence of God has ever conferred upon the human race.

“He was very zealous in enforcing the duty of christian baptism, as he thought it incumbent upon christians to do all in their power to maintain the purity of gospel institutions. He considered it expedient that the churches of baptized believers should not admit to their communion any but those who had been baptized on a profession of repentance and faith. But as he thought no other particular terms of church communion were prescribed in the New Testament, he concluded that every church was at liberty to fix those terms which it might judge conducive to the main end and design of the gospel, provided it does not attempt to impose those terms upon others. His notions as a strict Baptist, as was apparent from his own

Mr. Joseph Burroughs.

[1742.]

conduct, did not arise from any narrow and contracted notions, or party attachments : for he always discovered an equal regard for all sincere christians of every denomination : and though they were prevented by their different sentiments from communicating at the same table, yet he considered them all as being equally members of the same body, of which Jesus Christ is the Great Head.

“ Whenever he was called upon to baptize any person, it gave him real pleasure, even though they did not wish to unite with the church under his care. One instance of this kind was remarkable, and furnishes a proof of his christian zeal. A French gentleman and his wife, who were convinced of the errors of popery, made their escape from that land of darkness during the reign of the cruel persecutor, Louis XIV. and with much difficulty reached the English coast, and united themselves with a French Presbyterian congregation of Protestant refugees. Upon further inquiries after the mind of Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures, they soon received convictions of the true nature of baptism. But they could not attend to the ordinance, as they were wholly unacquainted with the English language, and there was no Baptist minister in that part of the country where they resided, who could perform the service in the French language. Mr. Burroughs being applied to, readily undertook two considerable journies at his own expense. During the time of his first visit, which was for two or three weeks, he took opportunities for religious conversation with them every day : and at his second visit he composed a discourse suitable to the occasion in French, and administered the ordinance much to the satisfaction of those worthy people. Some circumstances made it necessary to attend to their baptism in a private manner, so that it was not generally known ; one of these persons survived him ; and four of their children were, at the time of his death, members of an English Baptist church.

“ In the year 1742, Mr. Burroughs published a sermon from Acts xxii. 16, entitled, ‘ Baptism designed for all those in every age who profess Christianity, and not confined to the first converts only.’ Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Caleb Fleming, of Pinner’s Hall, who had published a work, entitled, ‘ A Plea for Infants,’

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replied to this piece in a pamphlet, entitled, 'An Appendix to the Plea for Infants.' Mr. Burroughs answered this, in 1743, in a work which he entitled, 'A Defence of Two Discourses relative to positive Institutions, against the Reflections contained in the Appendix to the Plea for Infants.'

"He was a very strenuous promoter of every scheme that tended to promote the common interests of religion, as well as those which were particularly calculated to benefit the Baptist churches: these churches in general were under considerable obligations to him for the influence which he exerted to promote a fund for the assistance of poor ministers, and to educate pious young men for the ministry among them.

"He was a steady friend to liberty and free inquiry, and a very bold exposor of the dangerous errors of popery. His sermon, at the Salter's Hall lectures, against popery, preached March 12, 1734, on the 'Popish Doctrine of Auricular Confession and Priestly Absolution;' and his sermon, preached at Little Wild Street, November 5, 1712, prove how much he abominated that unscriptural system of priestcraft and cruelty."

It is not easy to ascertain what were the precise notions of Mr. Burroughs on some important doctrines of the gospel at the latter part of his life. Had he not been a Trinitarian, and a believer in the proper divinity of the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit, he would not have invited ministers, who were very zealous for those fundamental truths, to have performed the services at his ordination: nor would the Particular Baptists have admitted him, as they did, to preach in their pulpits. From his name being among the non-subscribers at the Salter's Hall controversy, in 1719, no decided proof can be drawn that his sentiments were not orthodox: the most suspicious circumstance is, that he should have consented to unite with Dr. John Gale, who had avowed sentiments contrary to the Trinitarian scheme in the work of the ministry. His biographer states, that one of the first truths upon which Mr. Burroughs was wont to expatiate, was purity of heart arising from "obeying the truth through the Spirit;" that is, says Mr. Noble, "by your conforming to the precepts of Christianity, the only genuine and

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[1743.]

consistent standard of truth, which was at first published with the concurrence of the Holy Spirit, and is at present farther impressed upon the minds of all truly good persons, by those influences of the Holy Spirit which are furnished to all that seek them with a sincere desire of improving them aright.”

It would be easy to make extracts from his sermons, to prove that his style of preaching was vastly different to those who magnify the sufficiency of human reason, and employ all their talents to explain the Scriptures in such a way as shall make the grace of Christ, in “dying for the ungodly,” of no intelligible meaning. At the close of a sermon, occasioned by the total eclipse of the sun, April 22, 1715,* he thus speaks, “One would think, that those who were by the late eclipse put in mind of the day of judgment, could not suffer the thought presently to wear off; but whether they do or not, that day will speedily overtake them. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11. We, especially under the dispensation of the gospel, have all the encouragement to seek the favour of the most High our hearts can wish; since there is a Mediator appointed with whom God is always well pleased, and who is himself touched with the feeling of our infirmities. ‘Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,’ Heb. iv. 15, 16. Let us trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, for the acceptance of our persons, and the salvation of our souls.” p. 22, 23.

In his sermon preached at Salter’s Hall, 1734, nearly twenty years afterwards, he says, “Be so good to your own souls, as to believe the words of Christ himself; who does not insist upon such penances and satisfactions as your priests lay upon you: ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest: him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.’ You want no other Mediator to appear before God on your behalf; no priest to make or repeat that atonement,

* “April 22, 1715. About a quarter past nine in the morning, the body of the sun was wholly hid from us,” says Mr. Burroughs, “by the moon, for some minutes: at which time Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury, with several of the fixed stars, appeared. There was darkness in part for near an hour before, and as much after it was total.” p. 4. *note.*

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‘which he himself has completely made already, and made once for all. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.’”

For many years Mr. Burroughs had been much afflicted. As early as the summer of 1753, he had taken a journey to Scarborough for the benefit of his health. From thence he wrote a very affectionate letter to the church, to which they returned a most respectful answer. In October, 1757, he signified his desire to relinquish the pastoral office from his inability to sustain its various duties: to this, however, the people would not listen, desiring him still to retain the office, and they would procure him an assistant. Mr. Francis Webb was soon after chosen and ordained as co-pastor. “Mr. Burroughs,” says his biographer, “persevered in his beloved work of the ministry, till his strength entirely forsook him; and nothing could be a greater concern to him, than that he found himself incapable of continuing to publish the glad tidings of the gospel.

“In the close of his life his humility was very exemplary. He charged himself with many defects. He referred himself wholly to the mercy of God, and only prayed that God would enable him to finish well. His devotion was very fervent. Whilst he was in great pain he many times repeated, with peculiar emphasis, those words of the Psalmist, ‘I will love thee, O God, my strength!’ adding some short remarks upon the vanity and insufficiency of man, and upon the experiences which he had had of the goodness of God. At last, being worn out with infirmities, after some hard struggles, he expired in a manner uncommonly gentle and easy.” He died November 23, 1761, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Daniel Noble, a Sabbatarian Baptist minister, from 1 Peter i. 22—25, a text chosen by the deceased. Mr. Noble says, “In addressing you from these words I shall consider myself, and hope you will consider me, only as a remembrancer, one who is to put you in mind of those great truths upon which you have so often heard your late excellent pastor so largely expatiate. You well know that he always judged

Death of Mr. Joseph Burroughs.

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those truths of such great importance, as to require every possible degree of zeal and assiduity in those whose more peculiar business it is to recommend them. And I may justly add, that his sense of their importance grew stronger and stronger till the very close of life."

Mr. Noble, in describing his character, says, "It was his desire that I should say but little on this occasion concerning his personal character and conduct. But I could not undertake the service of this day, without claiming a liberty to make mention of some of his virtues. You will join me in bearing witness, that the general course of his life was so regularly and uniformly virtuous, as to render him a real honour to his profession. The integrity and purity of his heart were conspicuous in every part of his life. He manifested a most habitual regard to the great objects of a future world. He was earnestly desirous of doing good to all men. He was very zealous for the honour of God, and of the blessed Redeemer. And he was unwearied in his endeavours to recommend and enforce the doctrines and precepts of rational and genuine religion."

Mr. Burroughs ranked with the General Baptists, and was probably an Arminian; but there is no evidence from his sermons, several of which I have read, upon the subject of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ, that he took either the Arian or the Socinian side. From the extracts given above, it is evident that he had not so learned Christ: his views of the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, and the manner in which he exhorted persons to trust alone to the merits of Christ for salvation, prove that he had not adopted that unscriptural and irrational system, which, by denying the atonement, is most dishonourable to the Saviour, and, I fear, destructive to the souls of men.

After all, it is confessed that the fact of Mr. (Dr.) Foster, having been co-pastor with Mr. Burroughs for twenty years, is a circumstance unfavourable to the correctness of his sentiments respecting the baneful tendency of doctrines which pervert the gospel of Christ; which make it appear another gospel to what it really is. It is probable Mr. Burroughs had adopted, in some degree, the sentiment of *the innocency of mere mental error*; and

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Works of Mr. Joseph Burroughs.

from his views of candour and charity he feared lest he should deprive others of their christian liberty, in preventing even an honest Socinian from instructing his church. But had he acted upon the sentiments and with the feelings of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, he would have resisted the introduction of such opinions. "To whom," says Paul, "we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour, *that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*" The gradual decline of the respectable church at Barbican, in numbers, in purity, and in zeal; and ultimately, its utter extinction, should stand as a beacon to all surrounding churches, that they never patronise any error in doctrine, subversive of the gospel, either in ministers or people, but "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." *

There is a fine painting of Mr. Burroughs, preserved in the Redcross Street Library.

Mr. Burroughs had a brother in the ministry, the Rev. James Burroughs, who died young: he had composed eight sermons

* WORKS.—Besides the sermons already mentioned, Mr. Burroughs published a volume of sermons, and a number of single sermons. 1. On the death of the Rev. John Gale, preached at Barbican, December 24, 1721. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. 2. At an ordination of deacons, July 15, 1730. 1 Tim. iii. 13. 3. To the Society for the Reformation of Manners, 1731. Prov. xiv. 34. 4. Two sermons; one on the right manner of contending for the christian faith—the other, against the traditions of the Church of Rome, preached at Barbican, October 15, 1732, on occasion of collecting for the persecuted Protestants at Saltsburg, Jude 3. 5. The sinfulness of neglecting acknowledged duties, on January 1, 1737, at White's Alley, James iv. 17—19. 6. The Blessedness of a Benevolent Temper, at the Old Jewry, March 2, 1742; to the Society for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, Acts xx. 35. 6. On the death of the Rev. John Weatherly, at Pinner's Hall, May 31, 1752, 1 Cor. xv. 57. 7. The Duty and Reward of a Christian Pastor, at Pinner's Hall, March 22, 1753, at the ordination of the Rev. Richard Barrow, 1 Pet. v. 1—4. 8. Steadfastness not in vain in the service of Christ, on the death of the Rev. Isaac Kimber, February 9, 1755, 1 Cor. xv. 58. 9. On the death of the Rev. Joseph Morris, at Glass-house Yard, July 30, 1755, 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. 10. Fourteen sermons—to which is annexed a Latin Discourse on the Holiness of Places, from Isaiah lxvi. 1—3, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Dissenter's Library, Redcross Street, 1734. He published a Tract, entitled, "A View of Popery, taken from the Creed of Pope Pius IV."

Mr. James Burroughs.

[1783.]

only, and these were edited by Mr. Joseph Burroughs, and printed.

The following high character is given of this young minister by the excellent Dr. Doddridge. This was written upon the blank leaf of the copy of a volume of sermons, in the library of Wymondley Academy.

“The author of these serious, elaborate, and useful discourses, was educated with me at Mr. Jennings’s, and entirely answered the character given of him in the preface to the following sermons, some of which he composed while at the academy. The knowledge I had of his readiness to every good word and work, engages me heartily to rejoice that these remains are snatched from that oblivion in which his modesty would have been ready to have buried them. May those influences of divine grace, which so evidently appeared to work in him, attend these his labours, and crown them with abundant success.”—*Theological Magazine for 1783.*

The learned Dr. John Gale, P.P. was the assistant of Mr. Burroughs, as he had been to his predecessor, Mr. Allen. He appears to have joined the church when very young, as we find him engaged in preaching to them in Barbican in the year 1702, being at that time about twenty years of age.

In the month of February, 1705-6, Mr. Allen introduced him to the notice of the church, as having been educated by his father, who was one of the members, at a great charge, that he might become serviceable in the church of Christ, by preaching the word; that he had lately applied himself to the study of divinity, and he therefore recommended it to the church to invite him to become an assistant in the ministry.

Dr. Gale had been educated in the university of Leyden, and at the age of nineteen obtained in that seminary the degrees of Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy. From Leyden he removed to Amsterdam, where he pursued his theological studies under the celebrated Limborch, and contracted an intimate acquaintance with the well known John Le Clerc, which, after his return to England, he continued to cultivate by a literary correspondence.

As a minister, he was doubtless, at the time of his becoming

1706.]

Dr. John Gale.

the assistant of Mr. Allen, considered as being of the Calvinistic sentiments; but on some of those doctrines he afterwards totally altered his sentiments.

Being of opinion that an accurate acquaintance with the doctrines and discipline of the church in the ages next to the apostles was highly desirable, he considered the notions and practices of the fathers of the church would greatly elucidate the sense of the sacred writings. For these purposes he became a member of a society, which met weekly at the house of the celebrated Mr. Matthew Whiston, in Cross Street, Hatton Garden, for the purpose of seriously and amicably considering and examining the most ancient writers of the christian church, to determine the genuineness of the pieces attributed to them. On these occasions he sometimes took the chair, and according to the acknowledgment of Mr. Whiston, no member showed a more attentive study and conscientious attachment to the object of their meeting than he did, or discovered more willingness to contribute to the utmost of his power to extinguish all disputes among christians.

The latitudinarianism of Dr. Gale's principles fully accounts for the part which he took in the famous Salter's Hall synod in 1719; the history of which was given in our last volume.

That Dr. Gale should have been zealous against subscribing to the articles respecting the doctrines of the Trinity, and the proper divinity of Christ, at the Salter's Hall controversy, was perfectly natural. If he would not subscribe the Articles of the Synod of Dort, because they taught the doctrine of justification by faith, he of course could not subscribe to those which taught the existence of three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, and that of two distinct natures, divine and human, in the person of Christ. Dr. Gale, at Salter's Hall, acted perfectly consistent with his avowed principles: this is more than can be said for all the *non*-subscribers, who, while they professed to believe the doctrines, would not affix their signatures to human explanations, though they had either previously subscribed, or had been in the habit constantly of teaching them to the children of their congregations; and this too at a time when those doctrines were

Dr. John Gale.

[1711.]

impugned or denied ; and for the purpose of clearing themselves from the suspicion of secretly abetting the propagation of sentiments, which they believed were fundamentally erroneous, and of the most baneful and destructive tendency.

The principal work published by Dr. Gale was his learned Treatise on the subject of Baptism, in reply to Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism. These letters were drawn up in the years 1705-6, when he was only twenty-seven years of age, but they were not published till the year 1711, under the title of "Reflections on Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism." 8vo. Mr. Wilson, who is not a Baptist, says, "The extraordinary merit of this performance soon made the author known and respected ; and even those who were not convinced by his reasonings, awarded him just praise for his erudition and modesty, as well as for the candour and charity which he discovered towards persons of a different persuasion from his own."

"About twelve years distance," says his biographer, "from the publication of the Doctor's 'Reflections upon the History of Infant Baptism,' Dr. Wall, who had a Doctor's degree of Divinity conferred on him for writing that history, published an answer to the Reflections on it. The opinion that Dr. Gale had of this [Dr. Wall's] performance, (which it is certain was executed with great rancour and unmanly heat,) will be best known from a letter which he sent to his father, then at Antigua, wherein he thus expresses himself:—"Dr. Wall has written a defence of his History of Infant Baptism, in which he has treated me very roughly, and has endeavoured to enrage the clergy, as well as our own people, against me ; besides which, there appears not to be much in his book ; however, I am preparing an answer," &c.

His biographer adds, "But these, and all his other great designs, were interrupted by a slow incurable fever, which seized him in the forty-first year of his age, and in about three weeks carried him into a new and never-ending scene of action ; all which time he bore his sickness with that calmness and patience, that became the man who firmly believed the superintendence of a good and a wise God, to whose providence he had been used to resign himself and all his affairs. 'Learn to set light by all

1721.]

Death of Dr. John Gale.

these things,' was his answer to the imprudent, though affectionate concern of a friend, who asked him, some few hours before his death, what he should do to support himself under such a loss. This showed a full and thorough knowledge of the little value there is in all the enjoyments of this world. When his wife, whom he loved with the greatest tenderness, was crying, and expressing the utmost concern before him at the near approach of his departure, he gave her this last and tried rebuke, 'Indeed, my dear, you do not do well; trust in the all-sufficient One;' and then resigned his spirit to the great Father of Spirits. This was the man who believed, who preached, and who adorned the christian religion. Here was no enthusiasm; all was quiet, calm, and serene, as are those blest abodes to which he is gone." Thus far his biographer, who perhaps not being a christian, was therefore no judge of the happy deaths by which genuine believers have often glorified God. Such a man as this writer would doubtless have called the death of Stephen "enthusiasm," and pronounced Paul's confident expectation of a crown of righteousness the reverse to quietness, calmness, and serenity! "Let me die the death of Paul, and not that of Dr. Gale: and instead of trusting merely to the all-sufficiency of God, I would be 'looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.'"

His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Joseph Burroughs, at Barbican, December 24, 1721, from 2 Timothy iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight," &c. Mr. Burroughs mentions the disinterestedness manifested by Dr. Gale, as a Dissenter, and his zeal in writing, and travelling to make known his views of the gospel, were a resemblance to the labours and zeal of the apostle, in fighting the good fight, as well as in his integrity and constancy." "But though," says Mr. Burroughs, "he would be very earnest in defending his own opinions, yet he was far from bearing ill-will to any, for the sake of their differing from him, and of very large and generous principles as to the extent of christian communion, with regard to matters merely speculative; and in his conversation in general he shewed a good and agreeable temper."

Is it possible Mr. Burroughs could have alluded to the dis-

Dr. John Gale.

[1721.]

putes on the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ? And whether justification was of works or of faith alone? We hope that whatever Dr. Gale thought, Mr. Burroughs would not call these fundamental truths of divine revelation, "matters merely speculative." Mr. Burroughs further says, when addressing the hearers of Dr. Gale—"Besides what you have heard from him upon speculative points, you have likewise heard him discourse of 'the blessedness of the pure in heart,' in that, 'they shall see God;' you have heard him shew that, 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord;' he has warned you 'against rash and uncharitable judging,' against 'anger and evil speaking,' against 'subjecting your consciences in matters of religion to any human power,' and 'against resisting the authority of God, in any thing that appears to be required and commanded by him.'"—The apostle Paul was determined to 'know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified,' but it should seem that Dr. Gale determined not to know these glorious subjects, whatever else he knew among his people. After a very *jejune* description of his ministry, Mr. Burroughs concludes—"Yet let me exhort you, my brethren, to call to mind, and diligently to treasure up, the useful things you have heard from him, and let your practice be influenced by whatever you are satisfied he delivered according to the word of God: this will keep alive his memory to a happy purpose."

Dr. Gale is said to have been rather tall, and possessed a manly gracefulness of person, exceeded by nothing but his negligence to adorn it. His countenance expressed the innocence, as well as the greatness of his mind, and always appeared with that calm composure which springs from inward tranquillity. It is said that "he was truly pious without ostentation; serious without moroseness; humble, though in such high reputation for learning; cheerful without levity; and, on account of the benevolence of his disposition, and mild courteous manners, the object of very general respect and esteem." Some of the most eminent men in his day lived in habits of intimacy with him, and among others the Lord Chancellor King, Dr. Hoadley, at that time Bishop of Bangor, and Dr. Bradford, Bishop of Rochester. Dr. Gale left a widow and two children, a son and daughter, whose

1724.]

Mr. Isaac Kimber.

only support arose from a contribution set on foot by friends, which enabled his widow to open a coffee-house in Finch Lane. In that situation her submission and obliging behaviour, and her easy compliance with her humble fortune, shewed how much she merited a better.

Soon after his death, in 1724, four octavo volumes were published, entitled, "Sermons upon different Subjects, by the late Reverend and learned John Gale, to which is prefixed some Account of his Life." These sermons passed through a second edition in 1726. They are totally destitute of evangelical sentiment. Paul would have called the gospel of Dr. Gale "another gospel which is not another—but which perverts the gospel of Christ."

There is a very fine portrait prefixed to the four volumes, from a painting by Highmore, engraved by Vertue, having this inscription, "Johannes Gale, M. A. and P. P."

After the death of Dr. Gale, a Mr. James Howe was invited to become an assistant to Mr. Burroughs, but he declined accepting it.

Mr. Isaac Kimber accepted the invitation to assist the church, but soon after removed to Namptwich, in Cheshire. He was born at Wantage in 1692, and received his education there under a Mr. Sloper, who is described as an excellent tutor. Mr. Kimber made great proficiency in Latin and Greek, being much assisted by Mr. Jones, the Baptist minister. To perfect his education in the languages, he removed to London, and placed himself under the care of Professor Ward, of Gresham College; and in academical exercises under Mr. John Eames; while thus employed, he was a member of the Church in Little Wild Street. It was in the year 1724 that he accepted the invitation to assist Mr. Acton, the pastor of the church at Namptwich. He returned to London in 1727, and it should seem, resumed his former station in the church at Barbican, as he is mentioned in the list of the general body as their minister in that year, and also in that of 1737. He became the assistant in the church in Artillery Street, and afterwards its pastor, in which station he continued till his death, which took place in February, 1755, at the age of sixty-three years. Mr. Joseph Burroughs preached his funeral sermon, which he published, entitled, "Stedfastness not

Mr. Isaac Kimber.

[1755.]

in vain in the Service of Christ," founded upon 1 Corinthians, xv. 58.

Mr. Kimber published a life of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, and a life of Bishop Beveridge. After his death a volume of his sermons was published, to which a portrait and memoir are prefixed. While he was at Namptwich, Mrs. Elizabeth Milton, the third wife, and relict of the poet, attended on his ministry; and her funeral sermon, preached by Mr. Kimber, is the eighteenth in the volume.

A son of Mr. Kimber, named after his father, published a *History of England* in ten octavo volumes.

The public spirit and usefulness of the church in Barbican, while evangelical truth was preached and received, was very remarkable. Towards the latter end of the seventeenth century, a library was formed for the use of the congregation, and it continued to accumulate, until it became very considerable. A catalogue of the books of which it consisted is preserved in one of the old church books, which proves the taste and sentiments of the donors by whom they were presented. The General Baptist Fund, which distributes about two hundred a year, was established in the congregation at Barbican.

The liberality of this congregation was great.—After the fire of London in 1666, the parish officers of Cripplegate made application to the Barbican church for a collection for the poor who resided in that parish: upwards of fifty pounds were collected, and this collection was voluntarily made annually for twenty years afterwards. In 1711, there was a collection made for repairing the meeting houses that had been destroyed or otherwise damaged by Sacheverel's disciples, who burnt some of the places of worship belonging to the Dissenters in London, in order to prove themselves cordially attached to the constitution in church and state.

In 1727 a collection was made for the community of Bobbis, in the vallies of Lucerne, who had suffered greatly by an inundation.

In 1732, they made a collection for the Protestants expelled by their cruel prince, to the number of two thousand, from Saltzburgh, in Germany. In 1737, certain books of the library

1755.]

Dissolution of the Church in Paul's Alley.

before-mentioned, were voted for the use of the Baptist academy at Trowbridge, under the direction of Mr. Thomas Lucas.*

What a history of liberality and beneficence, while this people felt the force of that "faith which worketh by love!" But what fruit did the rational scheme of "sincere obedience and honest endeavours," the doctrine of "justification by works," produce for the benefit of the world? "Why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?" "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit;" ye shall know them by their fruits! "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Whilst the Barbican church was evangelical in its principles, its members and ministers were "the salt of the earth," and the "lights of the world;" it was "a city set upon a hill, which could not be hid." What it has become through the corrupt leaven of Socinian doctrines, its empty pews and deserted pulpit will tell the lamentable tale. The Lord Jesus said of it by his providence, "Because ye have rejected me, I will also reject you." "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

This church, which had existed upwards of one hundred and twenty years, kept together till about seven years after the death of Mr. Burroughs. On the fifth of June, 1768, it was agreed to dissolve the church state, and a hope was expressed that every member would unite with the church of Glass-house Yard, to whom they had resigned the meeting-house in Paul's Alley;—twenty-seven members accordingly joined that society, probably being all who remained of a community once the most numerous of all the Baptist churches.

* It was asked by Mr. Wilson, in his *History of Dissenting Churches*, &c. "What became of these books at the dissolution of the Barbican church?" A catalogue of the books was taken, and Mr. Lucas and his heirs made responsible for them to the church, in the event of his death, or the failure of the academy.

The infamous Titus Oates.

[1697.]

PENNINGTON STREET, VIRGINIA STREET,
RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY.

THE church here, formerly under the care of Mr. Isaac Lamb, as appears from the list of associated churches in 1704, was represented by three of its deacons, and of course must be considered as belonging to the Particular Baptists. One of these, Mr. Humphrey Burroughs, was a respectable weaver in Spitalfields, and had, by the blessing of God upon his labours, arisen to a state of considerable affluence. This gentleman narrowly escaped being ruined by the infamous Titus Oates. That base man had been originally a member of this church. He was afterwards, for sixteen years, a clergyman of the church of England, and then, for several years, a member of the church of Rome. His infamy in regard to what was called "the Popish Plot," is too well known to require being repeated here.

In his old age, Oates, about the year 1697, applied to be readmitted to the church in Virginia Street, but "they were all afraid of him," and it was not till they had kept him in suspense more than two years, that they agreed to receive him into their communion.

After some time, Oates attempted to ruin Mr. Burroughs in a Chancery suit. Crosby calls Mr. Burroughs "a worthy man, and of unblemished reputation." He adds, "I should have passed over this infamous man (Oates) in silence, had not the Pædobaptist gentlemen, when they have had occasion to mention him, been careful to note him as an Anabaptist."*

* Crosby's History of English Baptists, vol. iii. 166—182.

In an account published by the late Rev. Dr. John Evans, in the Universal Theological Magazine, for March, 1803, there is the following anecdote in reference to this event :—

"Mr. Joseph Burroughs, of Kingsland, son of the Rev. Joseph Burroughs, was the last branch of this truly respectable family : he died in the eighty-sixth year of his age, in 1799. 'About the month of October,' says Mr. Evans, 'I used to dine at Kingsland with the old gentleman, on a day which he devoutly set apart for the commemoration of the deliverance of his ancestors from the fangs of Titus Oates, well known for his infamy in the pages of British history. I used, after dinner, to read

1732.]

Mr. Lewis Douglas.

I find that in 1709 a Mr. Glover was minister of a place in Virginia Street, but know nothing about him. The congregation was reduced to a low state at that time; and in May 18, 1712, it was dissolved, and the remaining twenty-five members, of which Mr. Burroughs was the leading person, united with the church in Barbican, in which he became a deacon, and this led to his son, whose history we have given, afterwards becoming its pastor.

After these persons had left the church in Virginia Street, I find in the next year, 1713, mention of a Baptist church assembling there. This was one of those to whom the bounty of Mr. Thomas Hollis extended in 1715, when its receipt was acknowledged by a Mr. Chamberlain. The pastor was Mr. Lewis Douglas: this congregation contributed towards the repair of the baptistry in Fair Street, Horsleydown.

I know nothing further of Mr. Douglas; but the above-mentioned Mr. Edward Chamberlain was, I conclude, the same who was chosen secretary to the Baptist Fund, March 1, 1725-6, and continued till his death, March 1732. It appears that he was master of the charity school in Shakspeare's Walk. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Samuel Wilson to that society, March 19, 1732, and dedicated to the treasurer and managers, on account of their remarkable and generous regard to Mr. Chamberlain. It is founded on John viii. 36. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The preacher, in concluding his discourse, says, speaking of the deceased, "Is not the day of a good man's death better than that of his birth? Forbear then, you who are the surviving relations of our deceased friend, to sorrow as those without hope. What, though you have with him taken sweet counsel, and have gone to the house of God in company; though he may have been a useful instrument in promoting your joy and consolation, and is now no longer with you to advise, assist, and comfort you;

the particulars of the transaction aloud from a paper which was given me; and then we returned thanks to Almighty God for his merciful interposition in behalf of the family, who otherwise would have been ruined by the machinations of a wicked and unprincipled character.' "

Church in Virginia Street dissolved.

[1739.]

yet it is with pleasure I add, that I am persuaded there is not a member of this worthy society but was satisfied with his diligence and faithfulness in the trust committed to him. I might say, few in his station lived more universally beloved, or died more generally lamented." It is most likely, from the circumstance of Mr. Wilson preaching his funeral sermon, Mr. Chamberlain had joined the church in Prescott Street.

I know not who succeeded Mr. Douglas, but it is probable it was a Mr. Joseph Curtis. In 1719, the congregation under the care of Mr. Curtis was invited to join the Baptist fund. I find that he belonged to the society of London ministers, 1720; and that he was united with others in giving advice to the church in Goat Street, after Mr. Stinton's death, and that he preached and administered the Lord's Supper to that part of the church who adhered to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) John Gale. The other part of the church, which afterwards met in Unicorn Yard, solemnly remonstrated with Mr. Curtis, "on account of the injury he had done them; and not them only, but the whole interest of Christ, by administering the ordinance to those members who had rent themselves from them on account of Mr. Gale," &c. It is not said how Mr. Curtis defended himself; he probably considered it his duty, as it was very difficult to decide in the case which party were the majority of the church. There was *then* a considerable degree of respect paid to the circumstances which attended divisions in our London churches. No minister *then*, of any reputation, would have sanctioned self-willed persons, who, without justifiable cause, had rent themselves from the church of which they were members.

Mr. Curtis, about the year 1729, removed to Portsmouth Common, and preached for about a year, and then left it. On leaving that church, he settled at Folkstone, and died at Canterbury.

The church in Virginia Street was often supplied by Dr. John Gale at the latter part of his life. Mr. Joseph Brittain afterwards became its pastor, and was succeeded by the late Rev. Dan Taylor. The meeting-house was standing in 1739, and is mentioned in Maitland's List of the "Anabaptist Meeting Houses."

1714.]

Church in Glass-house Street.

ST. PAUL'S, SHADWELL.

IN the life of Mr. Benjamin Keach, there is mention of his having, by his influence, caused a meeting-house to be erected in this neighbourhood; and this might probably be the place intended. It is mentioned among the Anabaptist meeting-houses, by Maitland, in the year 1739.

I conjecture it was built after the Revolution, as there is no account of the church at Shadwell in the list of the general assembly. In the assembly held at Lorimer's Hall in 1704, Mr. Nathaniel Wyles attended as the pastor, and Messrs. John Brand and Caleb Hooker as messengers: it was also one of the ten churches which met at Joiner's Hall in 1705.

Of Mr. Wyles I know nothing but what has been mentioned of his preaching and publishing a funeral sermon for Mr. Elias Keach, in 1699.

GLASS HOUSE STREET, AND GRAFTON STREET.

THE meeting house in Glass-house Street, is mentioned by Maitland in 1739, as an "Anabaptist" place of worship. It appears to have been first occupied by the Baptists, about 1714, when a Mr. Thomas Ely, mentioned in the account of the church in Little Wild Street, having been rejected for his inconsistency by that respectable community, "drew away many disciples after him," and formed a new church in this place.

This quondam baptist soon gave up his friends in Glass-house Street; for at the close of the year 1715, he became a conformist, and obtained ordination from the Bishop of London! I know nothing more of him; he was most probably lost as to history in his new character as a clergyman of the Established Church.

While a Dissenter he published three sermons—1. A Thanks-

Mr. John Wilson.

[1727.]

giving Sermon, on November 5, 1711, preached at Goodman's Fields. 2. *Israel's Guardian*, on a similar occasion. 3. *The Saint's Assurance of Happiness*, preached at Glass-house Street, August 24, 1715, on the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Auchmuty, late wife of Samuel Auchmuty, Esq.

Dr. Sayer Rhudd, whose name has frequently been mentioned in our history, was pastor of this church in 1723.

There was a Mr. Hancock here in 1726; how much earlier does not appear. At this time the church applied to be assisted by the London Associated Ministers, who promised, "in the event of their obtaining a dismission," to comply with their request.

A Mr. John Wilson settled here in 1727. He was introduced as an approved minister of the general body in that year, and his name is found in the list of that body in 1732. I conjecture he died soon after this, as about that time a Mr. Wilson, of London, was invited by the church at Portsmouth Common, who it is said, in a manuscript before me, "promised to come; but the day which he had appointed to have left London, they received an account of his death."

While he was pastor of the church in Glass-house Street, very serious differences prevailed, so that a division took place; this, however, had no relation to the pastor, but consisted of a quarrel between two of the members, a Mr. Gold, and Mr. Freeman: this dispute was referred to several persons as arbitrators, who were ministers and messengers of the associated churches.

As the history of this contention may prove admonitory, we proceed to give some particulars concerning it.

The arbitrators sent the following decision:—

"It seems but too plain to us, that the exercise of love and forbearance, so much recommended in the gospel, has been greatly wanting in the general, and that instead thereof, a spirit of jealousy, contention, and emulation, has prevailed among too many of the members, which in time occasioned this unhappy breach."

After severely animadverting on the conduct of both parties, the report thus concludes—"And as we hope those who have separated themselves from the church when they consider, in a

1731.]

Advice of Ministers and others.

cool and christian spirit, such their hasty separation, will blame themselves for their irregular conduct; so we are obliged to declare the step they have taken to be altogether unjustifiable; which, instead of promoting, is the likely way to bring them and the laws of Christ into contempt, and is a practice which tends to break his churches, and to bring a scandal upon our holy profession.

“Upon the whole, we cannot but declare that we are greatly grieved on account of the present unhappy differences, and take leave upon this occasion seriously and heartily to advise both parties to humble themselves before the Lord, by joining together both in public and in private prayer: labouring together in the strength of Christ, to put on bowels of compassion and tenderness one towards another, forgiving each other for his sake; that a spirit of love and unity may be again restored among you, and the present division, which so plainly threatens your own future honour and peace, as well as the reputation of the several churches of the Baptist denomination, may speedily and comfortably be healed.

“And we think it proper, before we sign this paper, to wipe off a reproach too often cast upon ministers in general, viz. that they are against encouraging ministerial gifts in the churches, by now declaring it would rejoice our hearts to find the churches ready to try the gifts in each congregation, and to hear that any regular church hath sent forth any person whose abilities and conversation gave an encouraging prospect for usefulness in so honourable a station.

Humphry Frend

George Warren

Ebenezer Briggs

David Selby

Joseph Woods

Charles Bawlen

Edward Wallin

William Arnold

Sayer Rhudd

John Brine

A. Gifford

S. Wilson.”

The occasion of this dispute appears to have been concerning Mr. Freeman, who had been heard speak before the church, with a view to their calling him to the work of the ministry. The following circumstance throws some light on his character and

Mr. Orator Henley.

[1731.]

conduct: at least in the opinion of the then pastors of our churches, October 26, 1731. A complaint being sent by brother Arthur Howe, of Colnbrook, against E. Freeman, as an irregular and disorderly preacher,—agreed that the following letter be sent to the church under the care of brother Howe—

“Honoured Friends,

“Being informed that one Edward Freeman hath been in your parts, and amongst some of your friends, under the pretence of being a minister of the gospel; we have thought proper to give you notice that he is so far from being an approved minister, that none of us can esteem him worthy of regard as an orderly member of any church: nor do we know of any regular church or minister who esteems or encourages him as such—

Samuel Wilson

John Phillips

John Machin

John Wilson

John Brine

Andrew Gifford

Edward Wallin

William Arnold

John Townsend

Samuel Dew

William Moreton

Edward Townsend

John Gill.”

Mr. Freeman, however, appears to have found adherents in London, and to have formed a church, which probably met in Newport Market, as there was a meeting-house there belonging to the Particular Baptists, in 1731. It is said, this building stood in the market-place, and here it was that the famous orator Henley acted his eccentric part for a time before the period mentioned above. It was called the “Oratory,”* and appears to

* The following extract from the London Gazette of Saturday, January 11 to 14, 1728, will give the reader an idea of Mr. Orator Henley.

“Indictment presented by the Grand Jury against John Henley, clerk, his accomplices and assistants unknown, to the number of fifty or more, for unlawful assemblies.

“Whereas, it is notorious that John Henley, clerk, in priest’s orders, according to the form of the church of England, did, about three years since, hire a large room over the market-house in Newport Market, and

1740.]

Advice of Ministers.

have been opened July 3, 1726. As Maitland does not mention this place, it is probable the Baptists had left it in 1739.

Mr. Freeman had left his people in January, 1740-1, (how long before is not said,) but at that time they applied to the society of ministers, wishing to be recognized as a sister church, and expressing their readiness to comply with any thing judged proper for that purpose. They were advised by the ministers, after the matter had been considered by them, to dissolve what they called their church state, and that those who had come out of the world, and stood in no relation to any church, (if they judge it meet,) should form themselves into a church, and that the rest should apply to the churches to which they stood related, for a dismission. Nothing further is known respecting this congregation.

This digression appeared necessary, as the separation took place in the time of Mr. Wilson, and probably contributed to his removal. Circumstances like those now mentioned have brought much opprobrium upon the dissenting interest; especially when the separatists have pitched their tent in the immediate vicinity of the place they had left, and thus set up altar against altar.

registered it according to the Act of Toleration, as a place for religious worship, to be performed therein by him, the said John Henley, who pretended to dissent from the church of England, on account of Infant Baptism, (although that has been the least of his exercises; nor are his auditors of that persuasion,) and by his advertisements in the public newspapers, invited persons to come thither and take seats for twelvenpence a piece, promising them diversions under the titles of 'Voluntaries,' 'Chimes of the Times,' 'Roundelays,' 'College Bobs,' 'Madrigals,' and 'Operas,' &c.; and has appeared in the habit worn by priests of the church of England, made many base and malicious reflections upon the established churches of England and Scotland, upon the convocation, and almost all orders and degrees of men, and upon particular persons by name, and even those of the highest rank.

"We, the grand jury, conceive that this is contrary to the intention of the Act of Toleration, and tends to bring a disrepute upon the indulgence so charitably granted to truly scrupulous Dissenters; that it gives just offence to all serious Christians, and is an outrage upon civil society, and of dangerous consequence to the state." It is not known by the writer how this action terminated.

Mr. William Anderson.

[1743.]

Mr. William Moreton succeeded Mr. Wilson at Glasshouse-street. He had been a member of Mr. Skepp's church in Cripplegate, and joined the society of ministers in London, March 20, 1726-7. He was ordained over this church, July 26, 1733.—Dr. Gill delivered the charge, and Mr. Samuel Wilson preached to the church. The same sermons were delivered the next year at the ordination of Mr. Braithwaite, of Devonshire-square, and were afterwards published. Mr. Moreton, it is believed, removed to Chenies.

Mr. William Anderson succeeded him; and in his time the church removed to Grafton-street.

GRAFTON-STREET.

THIS meeting-house is of a good size and very convenient, with three galleries, a baptistry, and convenient vestries. Towards the erection of this place, the Rev. William Anderson largely and principally contributed, of whom we now proceed to give some account:—

This worthy minister, respectable for his moral character, talents, and property, had been called to the ministry by the church under the care of Dr. John Gill, in February, 1737-8, and in that month was introduced to the society of ministers, and to the general body at Dr. Williams's library. He was ordained pastor of the church in Glasshouse-street, May 12, 1743. It was then in a very low and weak state, but by the blessing of God on the ministry, it soon became large and prosperous.

It was about the year 1749, that the church removed to their new meeting-house in Grafton-street. For fifteen or sixteen years after this period, things wore a pleasing aspect: for about five years Mr. James Larwell appears to have been the assistant minister.

In October, 1763, Mr. Benjamin Messer, who had been a minister at Lyme, in Dorsetshire, was introduced as an assistant to the pastor; and this circumstance, which promised much comfort at the commencement of his ministry at Grafton-street, became the occasion of great uneasiness to the worthy pastor, and of much disorder in the church.

1767.]

Mr. Benjamin Messer.

There is no evidence that Mr. Messer was chargeable with any imprudence ; but it should seem that the excellent pastor could not bear the superior popularity of the young minister, whom he considered to be a rival, nor what he thought to be a transfer of the affections of his old friends. It is to be feared, there was not sufficient attention paid to these feelings with an intention to remove his jealousies, which, though perhaps unfounded, might have been easily accounted for, and deserved very respectful consideration.

The alienation which took place between these worthy ministers led them, on November, 1766, to refer their disputes to the society of ministers of which they were both members. The ministers, after hearing their respective complaints, adopted a resolution, "That the dispute had arisen from their having misapprehended each other's meaning."

The majority of the church seem to have taken the part of the assistant, whom they wished to become co-pastor. On January 27, 1767, messengers from the church attended at the coffee-house to request the ministers would attend the ordination of Mr. Messer. An answer to this application was deferred for five weeks, and Dr. S. Stennett, Mr. Wallin, and Mr. Reynolds, were appointed as a committee to make inquiries respecting the unhappy dispute. At the end of this time, February 3, 1767, messengers again attended at the coffee-house to learn the result, and were informed an answer would be given the next month. At the time appointed, the following answer was unanimously adopted and sent them, viz. :—"That the brethren cannot, in their present views of the affair, comply with their request ; and it was further agreed, to advise them to procure a reconciliation, at least so far as that both parties reunite or agree to separate."

The affecting termination of these contentions among brethren was, that Mr. Anderson, and some of his friends who adhered to him, left Grafton-street and occupied the meeting-house in Dudley-court, Hog-lane, near Denmark-street, Soho. This good man, however, did not long continue to preach ; he sunk under his mortification and grief, and died in September the same year.

Mr. Benjamin Messer.

[1772.]

His former pastor, Dr. Gill, preached his funeral sermon, September 20, 1767, which is printed, Vol. I. No. 36, of his "Sermons and Tracts." It is founded upon some verses mentioned by Mr. Anderson on his death-bed with great delight, 2 Tim. ii. 6, 7, and is entitled, "The Faithful Minister of Christ crowned." It is very evident the worthy Doctor printed this sermon under the influence of great grief and irritation. He bore a strong affection towards the deceased minister, who was his son in the gospel, and he considered that his departed friend had received in return for great kindness and disinterested benevolence the most unkind treatment and great ingratitude. The terms in which these feelings are expressed, shew the strength of Dr. Gill's indignation; this account may be read in the sermon, but need not be extracted for our work, as all the parties to whom it refers have long been removed from the imperfections of time, and we trust have met in that world where "the spirits of the just are made perfect."

There is a large full-sized painting of Mr. Anderson in the academy at Stepney, presented by the late Mr. Thomas White-wood, of Portsea. Mr. Messer, who was a very worthy and useful minister, continued pastor of the church till 1772, when he died. His funeral sermon was preached January 21, and published by the Rev. Mr. Macgowan. It contains no biographical account of the deceased, who, it should appear, left his family in poverty, as the public were called upon to contribute towards their assistance, and the names of several gentlemen were mentioned who would receive any sums for that purpose.

Having brought the history of this church to the period at which the division of our work terminates, we must defer the remainder of its history to a future part of this volume.

DEPTFORD.

THERE were two Baptist meeting-houses at Deptford, mentioned in Maitland's List, in 1739: the one called Rotherhithe meeting; the other Cherry Garden meeting. In 1731, a Mr. Joseph Matthews was a pastor of one of these. He was a member of the

1749.]

Mr. John Biddle.

society at Blackwell's coffee-house in that year. His name is amongst those of the non-subscribing licensed ministers at the Salters' Hall synod, in 1719. There was a Mr. Beamont here in 1729, and a Mr. Richard Barron in 1749, who belonged to the general body. In 1760, I find there was a Mr. Sandercock at a meeting-house in Queen-street, Rotherhithe. The other place, I apprehend, is where Mr. Moon, a General Baptist, now preaches. The old Baptist congregation, which Mr. Wilson mentions in the time of Charles II. was, in all probability, of the Particular Baptist denomination, and the church where a Mr. John Biddle was the pastor for many years. After his death the meeting-house was unoccupied, until it was taken by Mr. Brown's people in 1801.

Mr. John Biddle was one of the pastors who composed the society in 1723. His name occurs in the lists of the general body in 1727, as pastor at Deptford: again in 1737 and in 1749.

There is but little known about this minister; he appears to have been much esteemed by his brethren in the ministry. In January, 1728-9, three persons came to the coffee-house for advice from Deptford. One of them said, he could not hear Mr. Beamont because he was not sound in the faith: and all agreed, that on the same account they could not set down with Mr. Biddle: to which they added that Mr. Biddle was guilty of lying in the pulpit, because he had laid down sometimes four heads, and promised to speak to them, and yet never explained nor insisted upon any of them; and that they had opened a new meeting, licensed the place, and called a person to preach who had preached for Mr. Flood, at Richmond, while he preached for them at Deptford. The answer of the board was, "That they looked upon the whole of this conduct as yet to have been disorderly and irregular; that they had cast a great many unjust reflections upon Mr. Biddle, whom they valued and esteemed, and that they could not but be surprised that, whilst they appeared so zealous for the gospel, they discovered so little of a gospel spirit; that they saw no manner of reason to set up another meeting at Deptford whilst they had such provision, and therefore could not but advise them to desist from all further attempts of this kind."

Mr. Savage.

[1719.]

I find that in August, 1745, an application was made to the ministers of the coffee-house, requesting them to use their interest on behalf of Mr. Biddle's congregation, which had been deprived of their meeting-house.

It appears that they had occupied the meeting-house once a day, and some other congregation on the other part of it. The ministers advised that the people should go with some minister on a Lord's-day and assert their right; this was done, and an amicable arrangement followed.

The church under Mr. Biddle's ministry belonged to the Baptist monthly meeting in London. Mr. Biddle was very poor, and was regularly assisted from the Baptist fund. I have not ascertained the time of his death.

SABBATARIAN CHURCH, MILL-YARD.

THIS "Anabaptist meeting-house," as Maitland calls it, in 1739, is designated by him as being in "Mill-yard, Rag-fair."

The Sabbatarian church* meeting here was of early date, as it existed prior to the year 1670. At that period a Mr. Salter was its pastor, who probably continued till about 1678. He was succeeded by a Mr. Saunsby, who remained with it till about 1711. After him were two ministers who assisted each other, named Slater. About the year 1711, a Mr. Savage became the pastor, in whose time, 1715, the poor of the church were assisted by the bounty of Mr. Thomas Hollis. The name of this last pastor is found among the non-subscribing ministers in 1719, at the Salters' Hall conference.

Mr. Savage had for an assistant Mr. John Maulden, who had been pastor of a Baptist church in Goodman's-fields, but who left them on account of his having embraced the Sabbatarian principles; he died in 1714.

I conjecture this was one of the churches to which Mr. Stinton

* They consider the fourth commandment, in regard to the seventh-day sabbath, binding upon Christians; and that there is no divine authority for observing the first-day sabbath.

1726.]

Mr. Robert Cornthwaite.

alludes, in 1717, as not being "distinguished either as Arminian or Calvinistic."

At the period of Mr. Joseph Stennett's death in 1713, the Sabbatarian church, which had till then met at Pinners' Hall, united with the church in Mill-yard. Mr. Savage appears to have been succeeded by Mr. Robert Cornthwaite in 1726. He was considered a General Baptist; his name appears in the list of the body at the library in 1727, 1737, and 1749. He preached an annual sermon for the "Widows' Fund." He died April 19, 1755, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. A funeral sermon was preached by his assistant, Mr. Daniel Noble, from Heb. vi. 11, 12. From this sermon the following particulars respecting Mr. Cornthwaite are extracted:—

"Mr. Cornthwaite was born at Bolton, near Lancaster, in the year 1696. His father died when he was young, leaving his mother a widow with eight children. To relieve the burdens of his only parent, he engaged when very young in taking care of a school. He had been brought up by his parents to the established church; but on his arriving at years of maturity, he began to conclude that the imposition of public forms of worship and articles of faith were an infringement of the most sacred and natural rights of conscience. Being fully satisfied that Christianity did not prescribe any national religious establishments, he united himself with the Presbyterian Dissenters, and became one of their ministers. On leaving Bolton, he resided at one or two places for a short time, and then settled at Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, where he continued some years. While at Chesham his views were altered respecting the subjects, and the mode of baptism; and he therefore left the Presbyterians and joined the Baptists. He left Chesham to take charge of a Baptist congregation at Boston, in Lincolnshire, but meeting with some uneasiness there, he left it within a year." It is not said what were the reasons why he did not settle at Boston, but it was doubtless because he had embraced the theological views of Drs. Gale and Foster. "When it was found he had resolved to leave the congregation at Boston, he was earnestly importuned by persons of considerable distinction to continue amongst them. One of those who had become attached to him, made him an offer

Mr. Robert Cornthwaite.

[1755.]

of an immediate and very handsome provision in the established church." His biographer further says, "But, though this was no small trial of the stedfastness of a person who was wholly unprovided for, and who, by the latitude of his sentiments, then seemed to have but very slender hopes of encouragement amongst the Dissenters, integrity of every kind was so essential a part of his character, that as he rejected the offer, every one who knew him will easily believe he rejected it without the least hesitation." Soon after he left Boston he came to London, where the debates were carrying on with much warmth, which had grown out of the Salters' Hall synod in 1719. The congregation in Mill-Yard was destitute of a pastor; and from Mr. Savage having voted with the non-subscribers, it is probable the latitude of the sentiments of Mr. Cornthwaite was no objection to them. Mr. Noble says, "After having carefully and deliberately examined the controversy respecting the sabbath, he concluded that it was still incumbent upon Christians to observe the seventh day of the week agreeably to the plain and express words of the institution; and it is well known, how strenuous an advocate he hath ever since been for that which he apprehended to be the truth as to this point; in defence of which he hath published a considerable number of tracts, each of them sufficient to prove that he was fully determined not to decline any labour, or application, that might be found necessary in order to throw a clear light upon that subject."

Mr. Cornthwaite appears to have been a very diligent man: in addition to his labours as a minister and as a writer, he was the master of a school. "He was," says Mr. Noble, "naturally possessed of a very peculiar degree of spirit and vigour; and God was pleased to bless him with such a measure of health, that for very near the space of thirty years, notwithstanding the fatigues of his close application to the duties of his different capacities and stations, he was never confined by indisposition so much as a single day."

Mr. Cornthwaite, for the two last years of his life, was laid aside in a great measure by repeated strokes of apoplexy; of the third of which he died. Mr. Noble says nothing of the state of his mind in prospect of death; but enlarges upon what he calls

1752.]

Mr. Daniel Noble.

“the most essential and the most amiable part of all religion—his absolutely unconfined charity, benevolence, and candour.” He adds, “The little particularities and distinctions arising from religious differences were what he considered not the least obstruction to his friendship, affection, and mutual good intercourse; and he was well satisfied with every one whom he found to be governed by principles of sincerity, benevolence, and piety; and though he was so peculiarly cautious of violating any part of his own duty, he was always ready to make the most favourable allowance for the excusable failings of others; for nothing but hardened and flagrant acts of vice could deprive any person of his affectionate good wishes, or of any kind offices and assistance that were in his power.”

It is easy to perceive by what a specious kind of unconfined charity, benevolence, and candour Mr. Cornthwaite was distinguished: charity, which compromised supreme love to God, and genuine love to his neighbour; benevolence, that considered truth and error as equally beneficial; and candour, which embraced all those who called themselves Christians, whatever was their creed, and whatever their conduct, if they were not living in hardened and flagrant habits of vice! And yet Mr. Noble considers his late friend and pastor as having exemplified what he has entitled his sermon, “The Christian’s full Assurance of Hope!” There is nothing said in his sermon, from which we could conclude that Mr. Cornthwaite had known any thing experimentally of, or ever had preached on, the delightful theme, “who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.”

It appears that this church had always two ministers. In 1737 and 1744, a Mr. Matthew Read is mentioned as belonging to Mill-Yard.

In 1752 Mr. Daniel Noble, who succeeded Mr. Cornthwaite as pastor, was settled there. Though the pastor of the Sabbatarian church, Mr. Noble was also chosen to preach once on the Lord’s day to the church in Paul’s-Alley, Barbican.—In 1768 Mr. Noble was called to be the pastor of the first-day

Mr. Slater.

[1760.]

church in Goswell-street, after the dissolution of the church in Barbican. He however continued pastor of the Mill-Yard church till his death.

I have understood that Mr. Noble was of a family of French refugees, who had settled in London. He was a man of respectable talents, and published several sermons. One on the death of George II. has been noticed in our account of the year 1760.

Mr. Noble was succeeded by Mr. Slater, who has been dead only a few years. At his death the few remaining members united with the small Sabbatarian church, then under the care of Mr. Robert Burnside.

The church last mentioned had separated from Mill-Yard on account of the errors of Mr. Cornthwaite. I have heard the late excellent Mr. Burnside mention with tears, the occasion of that separation. It furnishes another instance of the fatal effects of latitudinarianism in doctrinal sentiments. It seems, in this instance, to have taken precisely the same course with that in Paul's Alley. Unsettled views respecting important theological sentiments led to Arminianism; this spirit of laxity led them on to Arianism, and from that to Socinianism; and that awful system, uninteresting as it is erroneous, gradually led to the breaking up of the church. Since the death of Mr. Slater the meeting-house has been shut up, and the matter respecting the endowments (which are considerable) was referred to the late Lord Chancellor Eldon by Mr. Burnside, for the appointment of new trustees. His lordship directed one of the Masters in Chancery to consider the business; and at last determined that part of the endowments should be settled on Mr. Burnside's people, who had formerly made part of the church at Mill-Yard, and the principal part was vested in trustees, descendants of Mr. Slater, who, it is understood, are not even Dissenters.

The meeting-house is again opened, and a sermon preached every Saturday morning by an Independent minister in that neighbourhood; but the Sabbatarian church, which died with Mr. Slater, has not revived. This affair shews how difficult it is, in most cases, to make a useful appropriation of property, funded for the purpose of perpetuating the peculiar principles of donors to dissenting churches.

1761.]

Mr. John Allen.

PETTICOAT LANE.

PETTICOAT LANE is near Whitechapel Bars, and runs northward towards Smithfield. There was an old meeting-house at the eastern side of the lane, in Boar's-head-yard, near Whitechapel. Tradition reports that this place had been used for worship for about two hundred and sixty years, and was originally used by the Papists. In the reign of Charles II. if not at an earlier period, it was occupied by Particular Baptists: a Mr. Hilton preached there at the time of the revolution. The next pastor was Mr. Richard Robins, for whom Mr. John Noble, of Currier's Hall, preached and published a funeral sermon, January 11, 1701-2. Mr. Robins appears to have removed from Chichester about 1699. Mr. Noble speaks of him as a very useful minister, and one who bore a dying testimony to the doctrines which he had preached. The church was in connexion with the other regular Baptist churches.

It is not known where this church removed to after Mr. Robins's death, or whether it continued to exist; but in 1755 the meeting-house was again occupied by Particular Baptists. Mr. William Collins was then the pastor; and it is thought the church had removed from Angel Alley, Whitechapel, and that it admitted of mixed communion. He published six sermons in a small volume. He had settled over the church in 1748.

Mr. Thomas Davis succeeded him, who preached a lecture on Monday evenings in Angel Alley. He was the pastor about twelve or fourteen years; his death was occasioned in June 15, 1763, by a stone falling upon him. He was buried in Mr. Brittain's burial ground, Mile-end.

In the time of this minister, 1762, Mr. John Dorset, a tallow-chandler in Brick Lane, Spitalfields, bequeathed 9,000*l.* (the interest of which was to be equally divided between nine Dissenting churches, of which Petticoat Lane was one); this has contributed to keep up a succession of preachers.

Mr. Davis was succeeded by a Mr. John Allen, who was ordained over them Jan. 8, 1764-5. He had published in 1752 a work in three volumes octavo, entitled "The Royal Spiritual Magazine; or, Christian's Grand Treasure." It is said that at this time he

Mr. John Allen.

[1769.]

was a preacher at Salisbury. He came to London in June, 1764, from Bewdley, where he was pastor of a church. Upon his settlement with the church in Petticoat Lane he commenced business as a linen-draper in Shoreditch, and failed in it. After this he was tried for forgery at the Old Bailey, and acquitted. He was afterwards confined for a time in the King's Bench prison for debt. The church withdrew from him May 17, 1767, on account of his immoral conduct. He settled after this with a congregation at Broadstairs, near Newcastle, and was again dismissed for improper conduct. He then left England and settled in New York, in the American states, and preached to a large congregation till his death.

He published a number of books beside those already mentioned, some of which are well known, having been frequently reprinted, and even recommended by the Rev. Mr. Romaine, who, probably, was not acquainted with the character of the writer.

1. *A Chain of Truths ; or, a Dissertation upon the Harmony of the Gospel, &c.* by J. Allen, a strict Trinitarian, 1764.

2. *The Beauties of Truth vindicated*, 1765.

3. *The Christian Pilgrim ; or, the Travels of the Children of Israel spiritualized*, 1765.

4. *A compendious Descant of the Antogenial and Theantropos Glories of Christ ; or, the Crown of Crowns set upon the Head of King Jesus, &c.*

5. *The Door of Knowledge opened in a Spiritual Campaign, &c.*

6. *The Spirit of Liberty ; or, Junius's Loyal Address*, by Junius, jun.

In the latter work he draws the characters of many Baptist ministers, of his time, in a sarcastic style. This we should not think of copying, as but little dependence can be placed on the opinions of such a man. He also wrote notes upon the Bible, published in two folio volumes. Mr. Christopher Hall succeeded Mr. Allen. He was a brother of the distinguished Mr. Robert Hall, of Arnsby. He was born in 1724, at Black Hadden, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the county of Northumberland. He became a member of the Baptist church at Hamsterley, and began to preach in

1760.]

Mr. Richard Pain.

what was called the Juniper Dye House, about four miles from Hexham. He was afterwards an assistant to an aged minister at Broughton, in Cumberland. He then collected a church at Whitehaven, in that county, and was ordained over them in 1753. He continued here till the beginning of the year 1760, when he removed to Harvey Lane, Leicester, and remained there about a year and a quarter. In 1761 he settled for a few months at Rye, in Sussex; leaving Rye, he fixed for six years at Luton, in Bedfordshire. He then removed to London to take charge of the church in Petticoat Lane, and was ordained Oct. 3, 1769. Upon this occasion Mr. John Langford delivered the introductory discourse; Mr. Richard Hutchings gave the charge; and Mr. Benjamin Messer preached to the people.

In November 1772, the church removed to Glasshouse Yard, Aldersgate-street. In 1774 they built a new place in Crown Alley, Moorfields, and continued there till Christmas 1783, when it was purchased by the city, and taken down. From Crown Alley they removed to a meeting-house in Hope-street, Spitalfields, where Mr. Hall preached till his death, Aug. 17, 1786, aged sixty-one years. He was buried in Bunhill-fields.

After the removal of Mr. Hall's congregation from Petticoat Lane, it was occupied by various persons till about the year 1800, when it was taken down.

EMBROIDERERS' HALL AND BREWERS' HALL.

THE former of these places is in Aldermanbury, and the latter in Gutter Lane. The church which met successively at each place was gathered by a Mr. Richard Pain about the year 1700, who had been a member of the church under the care of Mr. Joseph Maisters. About 1710 he embraced the Pædobaptist sentiments; and though this caused some convulsion in the church, he yet maintained his ground. It is said Mr. Pain was an useful minister, and was received as a member of the independent board.

Brewers' Hall is mentioned as a Baptist meeting by Maitland in 1739. I know nothing of the history of the congregation.

Mr. Thomas Craner.

[1756.]

JEWIN-STREET, AND MEETING-HOUSE ALLEY.

THIS street derived its name from the part of the town in which it is situated, having been originally called the Jews' Garden, because in former times it was the only burial place allowed them in England.

The meeting-house was built about 1672, for Mr. William Jenkyn, an eminent Presbyterian divine.

It was in 1754 that this place of worship was taken by the Particular Baptists. The church was formed of about thirty-nine persons, who, in Oct. 20, 1754, separated from the Independent church in Crispin-street, Spitalfields, on account of Mr. Potts being chosen the minister of that society : a peaceable dismission was granted them by the majority for that purpose.

Mr. Thomas Craner was ordained pastor of this society Oct. 21, 1756. He had been pastor of a church at Blunham, in Bedfordshire, and it is said left his people on account of some errors which they had imbibed, and from which Mr. Craner could not reclaim them; what these errors were is not known.—Mr. Wilson says. “We have been told, that when he happened to touch upon any doctrines in the pulpit which were disagreeable to his hearers at Blunham, they would manifest their displeasure by stamping with their feet. As Mr. Craner did not relish this kind of harmony, he, upon one of these occasions, singled out an old man who was particularly active, and threatened that in case he did not desist, he would descend from the pulpit and lead him by the nose out of the meeting-house.—This salutary threatening had for the time its desired effect!” This was certainly one way of warning the unruly, which, it is probable, Paul did not contemplate; but then it is likely he had never witnessed such rudeness even among the Gentiles.—Mr. Craner, soon after the event mentioned, received an invitation to settle with the people who had separated from Crispin-street. It was on this occasion, it is supposed, that a circumstance, to which a humorous anecdote alludes, is published in the Baptist Magazine, vol. i. p. 493. Mr. Craner being in company with Mr. Clayton, the Baptist minister of Stivington, in

1762.]

Mr. Thomas Craner.

Bedfordshire, the conversation turned upon Mr. Craner being about to remove to London. "Brother Clayton," says Mr. Craner, "I see my call exceedingly clear to leave Blunham, and to go to London." Mr. Clayton replied, "Ah, brother, London is a fine place, and as it is to go there, you can hear mighty quick; but if God had called you to go to poor Cranfield, he might have called long enough, I fear, before you would have heard him."

The first year of his residence in the "fine place," London, he published a work with this title, "A Testimony to the Truth, as it is in Jesus Christ; or, a Declaration of the Faith and Practice under the pastoral Care of Mr. Thomas Craner." Mr. Craner became a member of the society of ministers March 23, 1762: but it is apprehended his admission was far from agreeable to many of its members: as the next entry in the records is, "Aug. 17, 1762. Agreed, that no person shall be introduced into the meetings of this society who is known to be disagreeable to any member of it."

MEETING-HOUSE ALLEY, RED-CROSS STREET.

In the year 1760 this congregation removed from Jewin-street to Meeting-house Alley, Redcross-street, which is nearly opposite Dr. Williams's Library. It is a paved court without a thoroughfare, the meeting-house being situated at the upper end. It is an old building, small and plain, of an oblong form, with three galleries. Here Mr. Craner continued to preach till his death, which took place March 18, 1773, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. It is said by Mr. Wilson, in his "History of Dissenting Churches," &c. that "he was a man of respectable character; but a drawling, inanimate preacher, and very high in his notions upon some doctrinal points."

Mr. Reynolds of Cripplegate preached his funeral sermon, but did not publish it.

His remains were interred in the burying ground behind Mazepond meeting: a tomb-stone bears the following inscription:—

Churches of the Six Principles.

[1690.]

In memory of

The Rev. MR. THOMAS CRANER,

Servant of Christ, and able Minister of the Gospel,

Whose delightful work was to exalt the praise of Christ,

Peculiarly and evidently set forth,

The grace of all the persons in God, in the salvation of sinners.

Went to his rest, 18th of March, 1773,

In the 57th year of his age.

The sleeping dust shall reassume its breath,

And triumph over all the chains of death ;

He'll in his Saviour's strength and image rise,

To live and reign with him above the skies.

In addition to the book already mentioned, he published the following :—1. A Scripture Manual ; or, a plain Representation of a Gospel Church, with the business of its Officers, and the duty of its Members, 1759. 2. National Peace, a choice Blessing of the Lord ; a Thanksgiving Sermon, 1763. 3. The Christian Hero's Work and Crown ; a Sermon at Chelmsford, Essex, October 16, 1765, on the Death of the Rev. John Gibbons, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. 4. A Word in Season ; being a friendly and familiar Exhortation to the Church of Christ meeting in Redcross-street, on Tuesday, Dec. 12, 1769, 1 Pet. ii. 11—17. 5. A Grain of Gratitude ; occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John Gill, preached at Redcross-street, Nov. 3, 1771, from 2 Sam. iii. 38.

CHURCHES OF THE SIX PRINCIPLES.

IT was necessary to prefix this designation to the churches about to be mentioned for the sake of accuracy, but not for the purpose of provoking controversy ; because they were all founded upon the avowed belief of their members in the principles enumerated in Heb. vi. 1, 2, and without reference to any peculiar doctrinal sentiments. It has been usual to describe them as General Baptist churches ; but the fact seems to be, that they were like that in Barbican, of neither denomination : they were composed of persons of both sentiments, some Arminians and others Calvinists. They dismissed to, and received members from, the churches of both sentiments for many years ; but when

1690.]

General Assembly.

the Calvinist ministers and members withdrew from them, they at length became distinguished as General Baptist churches.

The ministers and representatives of Particular Baptist churches, who composed the general assembly in 1689, adopted as their distinguishing principles, "Owing the doctrine of Personal Election and Final Perseverance." But there were several Baptist churches in London, whose ministers and elders refused to subscribe to those principles: some because they held the sentiments avowed by the Arminians at the synod of Dort in 1603, and others because they refused to subscribe any terms of human composition. But though they could not unite with their Calvinistic brethren, they were yet desirous of being associated with each other for the purpose of strengthening their churches and increasing their number. It should be kept in mind, too, that they were all sound Trinitarian churches at this period.*

In pursuance of this design, an assembly was held March 16, 1690-1, six months after the general assembly first mentioned. This was held at White-street meeting, Moorfields, at which were present the elders, ministers, and messengers of five churches, all situated in London.† As the basis of their union, the following articles, and others, were agreed to and signed by all present.

"For the preservation of a cordial union amongst us, all the five parts shall once every year meet together at one place to celebrate the remembrance of our Lord's death in the Supper; only, whereas many of our brethren which belong to Goodman's Fields' meeting, differ from the other parts in the matter of the Lord's Supper, it is agreed, that they may have liberty to absent from this general meeting if they please." Signed by the pastor and representatives to the amount of thirty-one persons. Among these is the name of John Piggott, afterwards of Little Wild-street.‡

* Mr. John Griffith, who in 1682 was a fellow-prisoner with Thomas Delaune, in 1694 published a defence of the Six Principles in an octavo volume, pp. 208. entitled "God's Oracle, and Christ's Doctrine," &c.

† To these the church in Hart-street, Covent-garden, was afterwards admitted.

‡ In the year 1698 a Captain Pierce Johns, a mariner, who resided at

Mr. Abraham Mulliner.

[1703.]

WHITE'S ALLEY, MOORFIELDS.

THERE was a meeting-house in White's Alley before the revolution. The Baptists used it at the close of the seventeenth century, and perhaps much earlier. It was the same congregation as had been originally collected by Mr. Edward Barber at the beginning of the civil wars. Mr. Jonathan Jennings was its pastor in 1692. Mr. Joseph Taylor succeeded, and left the church abruptly in the year 1699. Mr. Abraham Mulliner was called to the pastoral office in the church in 1703. He was ordained in May the same year by Thomas Dean, messenger, William Smith and Joseph Jenkins, elders.

In the year 1704 he was appointed to preach before an association in White's Alley, composed of churches who had left the "General Assembly of General Baptist Churches" on account of the erroneous opinions of Matthew Caffin of Horsham, Sussex. He was introduced as one of the general body in 1727, as pastor of the church in White's Alley. In this year Mr. Henry Haywood was called to assist him for a short time.

It is said by Mr. Adam Taylor, author of the "History of General Baptists," that Mr. Mulliner was frequently engaged, by permission of the church, in assisting destitute churches, espe-

Stepney, in Middlesex, handsomely endowed these churches, and these endowments have preserved several small societies in existence to this day, though some of them have long departed from the evangelical principles of the worthy donor, who, doubtless, never intended that Socinians should be supported by the bounty of a Trinitarian, and a worshipper of Christ as God. This worthy gentleman came from Penzance, in Cornwall; he died Sept. 10, 1698. By his will, dated July 30 of the same year, he bequeathed two estates, the yearly rents of which were to be divided among the above churches. He left 5*l.* a-year to the church in Dunning's Alley, and the same sum to the Baptist church in the White Friars, Norwich; one of these estates is a small farm near Rumford, Essex, called Bury farm; and the other at Southminster, in the same county. The sum of 15*l.* was left to pay the expenses of travelling ministers so long as the general assembly should exist. This gentleman's bounty has, for many years past, been most unjustly alienated from its original design. The Trinitarian Baptists ought to have the whole of it: but how this could be effected the writer cannot direct.

1745.]

Mr. Charles Bulkeley.

cially that at Chatham, and was, it is evident, highly esteemed both by his own and sister churches.

Mr. Charles Bulkeley, I believe, succeeded him in the pastoral office; who, when Dr. Foster was laid aside, preached the lecture in the Old Jewry of a Wednesday evening. In Jan. 27, 1745-6, the congregation removed from White's Alley to Paul's Alley, Barbican, where he was to have the liberty of the pulpit every Lord's-day afternoon, excepting the first Lord's-day in the month.

In the list of approved ministers in 1749, I find him mentioned as pastor of the church in Barbican. In 1755 he preached the annual sermon for the "Widows' Fund." He died April, 1797, and was interred in the burying ground belonging to the meeting-house in Worship-street. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. John Evans. A posthumous work of Mr. Bulkeley was edited by Dr. Toulmin, and published in three volumes, octavo, entitled "Notes on the Bible."

The meeting-house in White-street was standing in 1739, and was used by Baptists, but is now removed.

GLASSHOUSE-YARD, GOSWELL-STREET.

THIS meeting-house is very old. It was used by the Baptists early in the seventeenth century, and was probably built by them. It is mentioned by Maitland in 1739, and is still standing, but has long been occupied by Pædobaptist Dissenters.

Mr. Thomas Kirby is the first pastor of whom I have heard. He was here in 1691, when it should appear the congregation was Trinitarian, large and prosperous, zealous and liberal. He died about the year 1727.

Mr. Joseph Morris had assisted Mr. Kirby, and after his death succeeded to the pastoral office in 1728. His name appears in the lists of approved ministers in 1739 and 1749 as pastor of the

church in Goswell-street. He died July 1755, and his funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Joseph Burroughs, from 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. Dr. Evans speaking of him says, "Mr. Morris was pastor of my own church, then meeting in Glasshouse-yard, a sensible, pious, and learned man. He left a volume of sermons behind him, admired for their solidity. He was in habits of intimacy with the excellent Dr. Johnson, who esteemed him for his modesty and ability. Mr. Benjamin Treacher succeeded him April 6, 1758. He had been an assistant to his father at the Park meeting until he removed to Glasshouse-yard." During his time, it will be seen in our account of the church in Paul's Alley, that when that ancient church was dissolved in 1768, the congregation in Goswell-street removed thither, and received into its communion the remnant of the Paul's Alley church. Here it continued to meet in connexion also with the remains of the church in White's Alley until 1780. At this period Mr. Daniel Noble was the pastor. A new meeting-house was erected in Worship-street, Moorfields, by the united exertions and for the use of four decayed endowed churches. These were—Artillery-street, Dr. Jeffries's; Glasshouse-yard, Mr. Bulkeley's; White's Alley, Mr. Noble's; and Fair-street, Mr. Brown's. This meeting-house was opened July 30, 1780. It is neat and commodious. Mr. Daniel Noble preached on the occasion from Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Lord." Mr. Noble is sufficiently correct in his sentiments as a Dissenter and a Baptist; in point of theological opinions, he appears to have been an Arian, believing the supreme deity of the Father, and the subordinate deities of the Son and the Spirit. The meeting-house is now occupied by the remains of several churches. Dr. John Evans, who succeeded Mr. Noble, and his small congregation, used the place of a Lord's-day morning.*

* Since the above was written, Dr. Evans has been removed by death. He was educated at the Baptist academy, Bristol, and at Aberdeen. It is said that when he settled at Glasshouse-yard, the Rev. Dr. Stennett told him "it would prove the grave of his piety." Dr. Evans is best known to the world by his small work entitled "The History of all Denominations." The tendency of this work is sceptical in a very high degree;

1688.]

Dock Head.

RUPERT-STREET, GOODMAN'S-FIELDS.

THIS meeting-house seems to have been built in the time of James II. for the people who originally met in Looking-glass Alley, East Smithfield.

Mr. John Maulden (or Malden) was at that time the pastor, in the years 1690 and 1692. He afterwards became a Sabbatarian, and has been mentioned in our account of Mill-yard.

I find in the records of the church in Paul's Alley, that they agreed in October, 1707, that the ordinance of baptism should in future be administered in Goodmans' Fields. It is probable this was in Rupert-street; by this church Mr. John Piggott was called to the work of the ministry. I find a Mr. Congrove mentioned in 1709 as pastor of a church in Goodman's Fields; he probably succeeded Mr. Maulden.* They differed from the other churches respecting the Lord's Supper, but in what particular does not appear.

DOCK HEAD, SHAD THAMES, OR FAIR-STREET.

THERE was a meeting-house in Shad Thames in the time of Charles II. Mr. John Clayton, the first pastor of whom there is any mention, died about 1688. Mr. Richard Adams, mentioned in our account of Devonshire-square, succeeded him, but removed to the Square in 1690, to assist Mr. William Kiffin.†

Mr. George White succeeded, and in his time a new place was erected in Fair-street. Mr. White died at the latter end of 1702.

Mr. Nathaniel Foxwell, who has been mentioned in connexion with the churches at Barbican and Hart-street, Covent-garden, settled there in 1702, and continued with good reputation till his death in 1721. His name is found among those of the non-subscribing ministers at the Salters' Hall synod in 1719.

and with loud professions of liberality and Catholicism, it is evident the author possessed only little, if any, towards Trinitarians.

* There was a Mr. John Malden among the London approved ministers in 1749. He resided at Peckham.

† In the records of Petty France Church there is mention made, April 1793, of a member being dismissed to the "Dock people."

Duke Street, Southwark.

[1698.]

Mr. Ralph Gould was probably first an assistant to Mr. Foxwell, and then succeeded him in the pastoral office. He died 1722, in the fortieth year of his age. Mr. Joseph Morris, who appears to have been a man of good learning, preached his funeral sermon Nov. 27, 1722. Mr. Benjamin Ingram, mentioned in our account of Hart-street, Covent-garden, came here in 1723, and died in Sept. 1736. His name is among the non-subscribers at the Salters' Hall synod in 1719, as was that of Mr. James Richardson, who was probably then an assistant to Mr. Ingram, as he was in 1727.

Mr. Samuel Fry, who has been mentioned as preaching Mr. Treacher's funeral sermon, was settled as pastor at Fair-street about 1738. He came from Milbourn Port, where he had been an assistant to Mr. Thomas Bosher. Mr. Fry died December 9, 1769, and appears to have been a man of respectable character and talents. He published a funeral sermon for Mrs. Hannah Brittain, entitled "The Christian's Desire to be with Christ," 1754. A funeral sermon for Mr. Robert Muggridge, in 1759; besides that for Mr. Treacher in 1756, already noticed. He was of the general body in 1737 and 1749.

Mr. Joseph Brown succeeded Mr. Fry, removing from Downton, Wilts. He had studied under Dr. Doddridge, and made great proficiency in the knowledge of experimental philosophy. The congregation removed to Worship-street in June 1781, and continued to assemble there till March 25, 1801, when they removed to Deptford, and united with another Baptist church in Church-street. He died May 21, 1803, in his seventy-third year. Mr. Moon, the present minister, preached his funeral sermon from Rev. xiv. 13.

DUKE-STREET, IN THE PARK, SOUTHWARK.

THIS was one of the churches endowed by the liberality of Captain Pierce Johns, in 1698. The former meeting-house, which was an ancient building, is said to have been the place

1698.]

Duke Street, Southwark.

where the celebrated John Bunyan usually preached when in London. The present building was erected about 1760; from a defect in the title deeds, the meeting-house became private property; and in 1800 they were compelled to leave it, and it is now used as a hatter's warehouse. There was formerly a large burying ground, called the "Baptist Burying Ground, Southwark," belonging to it, but there is no trace of it remaining.

The first pastor of whom there is any account was Mr. William Marner; he was pastor in 1688, died, July 16, 1691, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

Mr. William Brown was pastor in 1698, when Mr. Pierce Johns left his endowment; he died a few years afterwards.

Mr. Joseph Taylor was here from 1707, probably before. He died somewhere about 1715.

Mr. Joseph Jenkins, mentioned in the account of White Street and Hart Street, Covent Garden, removed here in 1716. Many of his people followed him, and at this place he spent the remainder of his days. He relinquished preaching some years before his death, but retained his connexion with the church. He was living in poor and distressed circumstances in 1736; he published several sermons, the titles of which are given in a note below.*

Mr. William Grove, and Mr. William Sturch, were assistant preachers during the pastorship of Mr. Jenkins: the latter person died in 1728.

Mr. George Coventry succeeded as pastor in 1731.

Mr. George Mulliner, son of Mr. Abraham Mulliner, before mentioned as pastor of White's Alley, settled here in 1751. He was succeeded by Mr. Samuel Hands, who came

* 1. A Discourse on Brotherly Love, 1706. 2. Two Funeral Sermons; one for the Rev. John Bocket, preached at Redmond Pond, Herts, June 4, 1708; the other for the wife of the above, July 8, 1708. 3. The Riches of Divine Grace, in the accepting of Great Sinners on their Return to him; in two Sermons on Isaiah i. 16, preached at Winslow, Bucks, 1708. 4. A Funeral Sermon for Mr. Thomas Adcock, Minister of the Gospel, White's Alley, June 28, 1725. In 1707, he revised the two Discourses of Mr. John Griffith, to which he prefixed short prefaces.

from Coventry about 1740; and in 1744 he removed from the Park meeting.

Mr. John Treacher came from Berkhamstead in 1745, and filled the pastoral office here till his death, April 12, 1756, in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

From a funeral sermon preached for him by Mr. Samuel Fry, we find that he was born at Chesham, Bucks, in 1680; that at twenty years of age he was baptized by Mr. John Russel of that place; and was soon after called to the ministry. Mr. Treacher was a representative of the church at Berkhamstead, to the general assembly held at White's Alley in 1703.

In his time the meeting-house in Duke Street was built; Mr. William Summers succeeded him in 1768. In 1775, Mr. Edward Rowcliff was settled here; and in 1799, Mr. John Brittain Shenstone. About a year after this, being deprived of their meeting-house, they removed to Gravel Lane; Mr. Shenstone resigned in 1809. They have since erected a place near Lant Street, in the Borough, where they are at present.

DUNNING'S ALLEY, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.

THE meeting house was situated in a large paved thoroughfare in Bishopsgate without, leading into Moorfields. It is probable the church was formed by Mr. John Griffith, during the Commonwealth, as he began preaching about 1640. In 1660, he published a small piece, entitled "A Complaint of the Oppressed against Oppressors; or, the unjust and arbitrary Proceedings of some Soldiers and Justices against some sober and godly Persons in and near London, who now lie in stinking Gaols for the sake of a good Conscience; with some Reasons why they cannot swear Allegiance to obtain Liberty."

While in prison in 1683, Mr. Griffith published a narrative of his case, as before mentioned. After his release in 1684,

1684.]

Mr. John Griffith.

he returned to his congregation, and was no more interrupted or prevented from pursuing his labours.

In the year 1694, in addition to the discourse on the "Six Principles," he published another in the same volume, entitled "A Treatise touching Falling from Grace;" this contains about fifty pages, and is an attempt to expose what Mr. Griffith considered the absurd doctrine of "Final Perseverance:" which, if it was correctly stated by Mr. Griffith, in a chapter entitled "The Absurdities that naturally flow from the Doctrine of Impossibility for Believers to fall totally and finally from Grace;" could not be too strongly reprobated. It is not necessary to copy these "Fourteen Absurdities," because they are not the sentiments of the Calvinists, but the manufactured, and caricature statements of an Arminian. Nor shall I copy the "Thirteen Reasons by which it is plainly proved that Believers in Christ may fall from Grace." If assertions are to be taken for arguments, then Mr. Griffith has plainly proved these statements!

In a Treatise of Mr. Benjamin Keach, entitled "The Golden Mine Opened," &c. published in 1694, this work of Mr. Griffith is noticed.—"Reader," says Mr. Keach, "I have, since these sermons were printed off, met with a book wrote by a person, whom I both esteem and honour (excepting his opinion), entitled "A Treatise touching Falling Away;" wherein he endeavours to answer some of our arguments for the Saints' Final Perseverance. Had I met with it sooner, I had given a particular reply; but, in general, the reader may find he hath here an answer to what he hath said. He endeavours to prove the elect may be deceived, which we deny not, though not finally deceived; for that our Saviour intimates to be impossible; and to say none are the elect but they whose warfare is finished, seems strange to me; and to suppose the new covenant spoken of in Jeremiah xxxi. refers to the Jews only when called in the latter days, is not true, but is contradicted by the apostle, Hebrews viii. x. Our argument, that sin cannot separate from God's love, is here also fully cleared: as also what he says, that Christ's sheep may cease following him, and so fall out of his hand. I have answered likewise, it is the property of faith, they do, and shall follow him; God has put his fear into their hearts, and they shall

Dunning's Alley.

[1694.]

not depart from him. Moreover, the absurdities that he pretends do attend the doctrine of Final Perseverance, I find I have taken off, though I have not his book.”*

This piece, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is the first work which was published by Baptists in defence of this Arminian tenet. There had been, doubtless, some among them from the time of Wickliffe, who held different opinions respecting the doctrines of religion: some taking the opinion of Austin, and others of Pelagius; but up to this period what they had published related to the more general topics and defences of themselves, and their peculiar opinions. I am not aware that any thing on the Arminian principles is to be found in any of the voluminous writings of that eminent general Baptist minister, Mr. Thomas Grantham.

Mr. Griffith died, May 16, 1700, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Richard Allen, of Barbican, who published it with the title of “A gainful Death, the end of a truly Christian Life;” founded upon Phil. i. 21: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” It appears from this sermon, that out of nearly fourscore years, more than threescore had been sincerely and solemnly spent in the work of the ministry: “fourteen of which he passed in sufferings, bonds, and imprisonments for his Lord, and the testimony of a good conscience!”

Mr. Allen, alluding probably to Mr. Griffith’s zeal for the “Six Principles,” says, “He was somewhat too narrow and straight in his notions concerning terms of communion; but this we have reason to think proceeded from his sincere zeal and tender respect to the laws of Jesus Christ. I know of no dishonour or blemish he brought upon our holy religion in his so long profession of it; but he was in general an ornament and reputation to it. He bore his long sickness and pains with much patience and submission to the divine will, and to the last

*“Address to the Christian Readers; chiefly to such as were Subscribers for, and principal Promoters of the Publication of this Work. From my house at Horse-lie-down, in Freeman’s Lane, Southwark.—September 13, 1694.”

1692.]

St. John's Court, Covent Garden.

rejoiced in full assurance of hope ; he being conscious that Christ was his life, thereupon comfortably concluded that "death would be his gain."

His two discourses were reprinted in 1707, by Mr. Joseph Jenkins, of High Hall, at the request of the only surviving son of Mr. Griffith. They are said to have been "revised, improved, and enlarged," and were dedicated "To the Church of Christ, meeting in Dunning's Alley, without Bishopsgate, London, under the pastoral care of Mr. Robert Jemmett."

It is probable that Captain Pierce Johns, who endowed six churches holding the six principles, in 1698, was a member of this church ; his giving less to the church in Dunning's Alley than to the rest, might perhaps have arisen from its being composed of fewer numbers. The half of the interest was given to Mr. Griffith and his successors in the pastoral office, and half to the poor members of the church.

Mr. Robert Jemmett, who succeeded Mr. Griffith, was in 1696 pastor of the church in Goodman's Fields. In 1700, he removed to Dunning's Alley, where he continued pastor till his death, at which time the church was dissolved. Mr. Jemmett was living in 1724 ; the church was much reduced at the time of his death : but several members, wishing to keep up their church, hired a meeting house in Catherine-wheel Alley, Whitechapel, where they assembled some years for public worship, and claimed the appellation of the Old Church. The emolument arising from Pierce Johns' bequest, was also continued to them. At a meeting of the trustees, held February 19, 1727, it was resolved that the church in Dunning's Alley, had misapplied the money. It was, however, paid them till 1729, when the trustees passed a resolution, that the said church was extinct.

ST. JOHN'S COURT, HART STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

THE origin of this church has been already given ; from which it appears to have been the first Baptist church west of Temple

Mr. Joseph Jenkins.

[1702.]

Bar. The place is described as convenient, and situated at the two Golden Balls, the upper end of Bow Street, by Hart Street, near Covent Garden.

On June 28, 1692, they chose Mr. John Piggott, to preach on one part of the Lord's day, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and Mr. Mark Key to preach on the other part of the day : these services were undertaken by them.

The church very much increased, but they soon found that they could not submit to the interference of the "Assembly" to which they belonged, without losing their independence; therefore, on February 5, 1692-3, they dissolved their union, and declared themselves an Independent congregation.

The church, at its first constitution, did not practise singing in public worship; but on October 25, 1692, they agreed, that "one psalm or hymn might be sung on days of public thanksgiving!"

It was not more than seven years before it was found that the Calvinistic sentiments of Mr. Piggott, and of some ministers who occasionally preached for him, were offensive to several members of the church, and therefore the separation took place which we have mentioned in our account of the church in Little Wild Street; and the place in Hart Street was left in possession of the Arminians.

The church in Hart Street was now in a very reduced state as to numbers; but was soon supplied with a minister, Mr. Nathaniel Foxwell, who had come from Norwich, and who had been employed during the time of Mr. Piggott, chiefly as a morning preacher. He declined accepting the pastoral office, and in December 1700 was dismissed from his station as morning preacher. He will fall under our notice again in another part of our work.

At the latter end of 1702, Mr. Joseph Jenkins was called to the office of pastor. He was a member of the church in White's Alley, and an occasional preacher there. He appears to have been much esteemed, and it was not till they had been repeatedly solicited by the people in Hart Street, that they would consent to part with him. Mr. Jenkins continued with them till 1709,

1670.]

High-Hall, Smithfield.

when he resigned his charge and accepted the pastoral office in the church of High Hall, Cow-Lane, London; from thence he removed to the church in Duke Street, Southwark.

From the year 1717, till the latter end of 1723, Mr. Benjamin Ingram was pastor of this church, and then removed to the church in Fair Street, Horsleydown.

Mr. James Smith succeeded to the pastoral office in the year 1729, and was assisted by Mr. Joseph Eades until 1727. Mr. Smith continued till the church dissolved, about April 1738. He was of the general body in 1727, and 1737. This meeting-house was standing in 1754.

From a survey of the history of these endowed churches, and marking the decline of all, and the extinction of several of them, one is ready to conclude that endowments are unfavourable to the prosperity of the congregations on which they are settled. This appears to be the general rule respecting them, though there are certainly some exceptions to it. Thus much, however, might be safely said, that when the amount of the annual endowments encourages a spirit of indolence and unconcern about seeking the good of the people by the minister, and pride and overbearing consequence in the trustees, or covetousness in the congregation, they always prove injurious. They may serve to support a congregation, nominally, for some years, but it is likely the cause of religion will not be promoted, nor its power enjoyed in such churches.—In this case, as in all others, “the love of money” has often proved to be “the root of all evil!”

CHURCH AT HIGH-HALL, WEST SMITHFIELD.

There was a General Baptist Church at “High-hall,” in St. John’s Court, Cow Lane, West Smithfield; the building has been long since destroyed. This was collected by Dr. William Russel, the leading polemic in the public disputation held at Portsmouth, just after the Revolution in 1688. Dr. Russel published one work in 1663, and another in 1702, so that he

High-Hall, Smithfield.

[1760.]

was for a long period employed in the ministry. He had been educated in the University of Cambridge, where he procured the degree of M. A. then B. A. and afterwards M. D. Crosby says, "He was a worthy minister, of great learning and piety, and well versed in the logical methods of disputation."

The following is a list of his works :—

1. No Seventh-Day Sabbath commanded by Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, 1663. 2. An Epistle concerning Baptism, in Answer to Thomas James, of Ashford, 1676. 3. Quakerism is Paganism, by William Luddington's Confession, Dedicated to William Penn. 4. A Vindication of the Work of Hercules Collins, in reply to Mr. Harrison's work on Infant Baptism. 5. Animadversions on Mr. Allen's Essay on Conjoint Singing, 1696. 6. Infant Baptism is Will-worship; being a Confutation of Dr. Birneault's Answer to the Portsmouth Disputation, 1700. 7. A Just Vindication of the Doctrine and Practice of John the Baptist, Christ, and his Apostles, concerning Water-baptism, in opposition of Mr. Hawardine, of Marche.

The history of the London Churches from 1760 to 1820 will be resumed in a subsequent chapter.

BOOK III.

HISTORY OF THE WESTERN CHURCHES.

1653—1820.

IT cannot be ascertained at what precise period the baptized believers in the west of England, of the Calvinistic opinions, first formed themselves into congregational churches. An association of these churches met, I conjecture for the first time, at Wells, on the 6th and 7th day of the ninth month, 1653. At this meeting it was debated "whether laying on of hands on baptized believers was an ordinance of Christ?" The majority were of opinion there were neither precept nor precedent to warrant it; but they were unanimous in concluding that the ordination of ministers, either pastors or missionaries, by fasting and prayer should be accompanied with the imposition of hands. They agreed too that, whether it was practised or not by the churches in regard to baptized persons, it should not be a term of communion; and that if any minister contended for it as such, he should not be suffered to preach in any of the associated churches."

The circular letter sent to the churches was signed, by the appointment of the whole, by Thomas Collier.

The Association met the next year at Wells, the 26th and 27th days of the first month, 1654. The letter to the churches was signed, as before, by Thomas Collier.

The next year it met at Bridgewater, the 18th day of the second month, 1655; and they addressed a letter to the churches of Christ assembling in Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, or elsewhere in Ireland.

Though there was no Baptist among the judges, who sat on the trial of King Charles I. in 1648, yet this denomination increased

Churches formed in Ireland.

[1655.]

greatly among the officers of the army afterwards. The conquests of Oliver Cromwell in Ireland led to several of the Baptist ministers going to that country, who were paid by the state. One of these was Mr. Thomas Patient, who settled, after the Restoration, at Devonshire-square. The few Baptist churches which were in Ireland, before the establishment of the Baptist Irish Society in 1813, were formed at the period of the Commonwealth.

The church in Bridgewater had written an expostulatory letter before this, which had not been well received; in this they say, to their brethren in Ireland, "Dear brethren, we desire the Lord to teach you to deny yourselves in this case (deriving pecuniary support from the civil magistrate), and truly we have heard likewise of the great vanity and pride in apparel of some brethren in the ministry with you; and whereas, they should be patterns in humility, meekness, and a good conversation, they are too much patterns of the contrary. These things, dear brethren, have often sounded in our ears, (and indeed hath pierced our hearts), not only from enemies but friends; and indeed we cannot doubt that the large allowance from the state in Ireland hath drawn over many brethren to be preachers there: not but we rejoice in the flourishing of the gospel in that nation, and could desire that there were more publishers of it, but it would have added to our joy had they come there upon better principles. We desire not to mention particulars in this case, but that we hope is reformation, which will be our joy in the Lord, being that which indeed hath administered matter of grief and sorrow to our souls," &c.

This letter was signed by the messengers of the following churches:—Bridgewater, Stoke, Taunton, Wells, Wedmore, Hatch, Riden, Chard, Dalwood, Bristol, Somerton, Abington, Sudbury, Lyme, Dartmouth, Totness, Luppit, and Bradley.

It is added, "Our brethren in Ireland did never to this epistle return us any answer, which was our trouble."

The next meeting was held at Chard the 28th day of the seventh month, 1655. They resolved, that at the following meeting, appointed to be held at Wells in the spring of 1656, "to spend four days, two of them in seeking the Lord for the pouring out of the Spirit, and those gifts which the work of God calls for:

1656.]

Confession of Faith.

and that we may the better know the work of the saints of this day, inquiring diligently, as Daniel did, what special word of prophecy is now fulfilling upon the saints in this present condition, looking at the welfare of God's people in particular," &c. This letter was signed by Thomas Collier and John Pendarves.

The meeting was held at Wells from the 8th to the 11th of the second month, 1656. It is mentioned in the circular letter that, "they had been informed that the report of the life and union, and the appearances of the Lord which had been found among them in this work, had provoked very many, both churches and saints, in the south and north parts of this nation, to assemble together and have fellowship with them in this cry," &c. This letter was signed by Alexander Atkins, William Facey, Nathaniel Strange, and John Owen.

The association assembled at Bridgewater the third day of the ninth month, 1656. The circular letter was dated the 6th, and was signed by Thomas Collier and Nathaniel Strange.

In this year the churches published a quarto pamphlet, which was entitled, "A Confession of the Faith of several Congregations of Christ in the County of Somerset, and some Churches in the Counties more adjacent." This was dedicated "To the sons and daughters of Zion: grace, peace, mercy, be multiplied," &c. In this they declare their approbation of the Confession of Faith, published by the seven churches in London, 1644. "When," they say, "the Lord set us first upon the work, we did not think of bringing it to public view, but did it rather for a trial of our unity in the faith, for our more close fellowship one with another. Yet having finished it, we judge there is more than ordinary necessity for us thus to publish.

"1. In regard of the general charge laid upon our profession, as if none in the counties who professed baptism were of our brethren's judgment in London; but hold free-will, falling away from grace, &c. All which, through the grace of God, we disclaim, and not only we, but to our knowledge many other churches in the adjacent counties.

"2. We judge nothing more suitable to us, as members of our Lord, wherein we might bear our witness for him in this day of

Confession of Faith.

[1656.]

temptation, in fruit, as well as in practice, than this our testimony to the faith and truth as it is in Jesus. And oh! that it might be a remembrancer to all our sister churches in this commonwealth, that they be not soon moved away from the hope of the gospel.

“ 3. We do not mind such a power as some men pretend to in these days, viz. a light and a voice within them, without any relation to Christ and scripture; but the power of Christ handed forth in the ministration* of the gospel through the exercise of faith in Jesus.

“ Signed in the name and by the appointment of the several churches by us, whose names are as follow :—

“ In the county of Somerset :—

Bridgewater,	{ Alexander Atkins.
	{ Tobias Wells.
Taunton,	Thomas Mercer.
Ryden,	Robert Adridge.
Hatch,	George Parsons.
Chard,	{ Robert Channon.
	{ John Spake.
Somerton,	{ William Scriven.
	{ William Anger.
Wells	{ David Barrett.
	{ Thomas Savory.
Wedmore,	{ Thomas Urch.
	{ Richard Coles.
Stoak,	William Hare.
Wincanton,	{ Blaze Allen.
	{ Ambrose Brooks.
Munticere,	Thomas Bird.

“ In the county of Wilts :—

North Bradley,	{ William Crabb.
	{ Nicholas Elliott.

“ In the county of Devon :—

Luppit,	{ Edmund Burford.
	{ Samuel Ham.

* Alluding to the Quakers.

1657. |

Western Association.

“ In the county of Gloucester :—

Sudbury,

James Nobs.

Bristol,

Henry Hineham.

“ In the county of Dorset :—

In and near Lyme

{ Abraham Podger.
{ Thomas Collier.

The association assembled at Chard the 18th day of the second month, 1657.

In their circular letter they suggest the following as subjects for prayer. 1. “ That the Lord would put his fear in our hearts, and bless this our present meeting, raising our faith, and keeping us spiritual in the work. 2. That he would perform his great promise in the pouring forth of his Spirit upon his people to enlighten them in, and fit them for his work in this our day, uniting and carrying them on with comfort and courage in his work. 3. To be made deeply sensible of the state of all the churches of that worldly spirit, and of those divisions that are amongst them, and of their proneness to turn aside from the truth as it is in Jesus, and to pray that the Lord would purge and build whole Zion. 4. That the Lord would call in his ancient people, the seed of Abraham his friend. 5. That the Lord would send out more labourers into his harvest, and stand by those already engaged in the work, that they may be in power what they appear to be in word. 6. That the Lord would call and pluck his people out of Babylon according to his word ; and that he would maintain the liberty of his people, and bring to nought the plots and devices of the enemies that are against it. 7. That the Lord would enable us rightly to improve the mercies already received.”

This letter bears the signatures of Thomas Collier and Nathaniel Strange.

Their next general meeting was appointed to be held at Tiverton, on the 14th day of the seventh month, where they intended to stay the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th days.

The next association assembled at Chard the 18th day of the second month, 1657 ; and at Tiverton, as appointed, on the 18th day of the seventh month, in the same year. A most alarming and faithful letter was addressed from them to the churches, from

Church in Broadmead.

[1640.]

which it appears iniquity abounded, and the love of many had waxen cold. This was signed by Thomas Collier, Nathaniel Strange, and Thomas Glass.

The pamphlet from whence the above account has been extracted thus concludes :—" We have appointed our next meeting at Dorchester, and desire the churches to send their messengers to be there the second day (at night) of the second week of the third month, in 1658."

From this brief history a tolerable idea may be formed of the spirit and sentiments of the churches at this period in the West of England, in which those of the South and North were united with them. The confusions which followed the death of the Protector Oliver Cromwell, which happened in the year 1659, it is most likely interrupted the prosperity of the Baptist churches ; and the events immediately subsequent to the Restoration of Charles II. in 1660 put an end to the Association, and brought the churches into a state of dispersion and persecution.

BRISTOL.

THE churches in Bristol demand our first attention, because they have been the principal Baptist societies in this county, and indeed in the West of England.

CHURCH IN BROADMEAD.

This church, formed about 1640, has derived its distinction from the circumstance of one of its deacons, a Mr. Edward Terrill, who was a ruling elder, having left a considerable estate to the pastor, provided he be capable of teaching the Hebrew and Greek tongues ; and that he devote three afternoons in the week to the education of young men not exceeding twelve. Mr. Robert Boddenham, another deacon, who died in 1721, left an estate, the produce of which, in 1774, was about 30*l.* per annum. The Bristol fund, founded in 1717, supports two students, and

1707.]

Church in Broadmead.

12*l.* per year had at that time for many years been sent from a church at Devizes for a similar purpose.

Mr. Terrill, who left the principal sum (the amount of which I have not been able to ascertain), died about the time of the Revolution, but it is understood the money was not possessed for several years afterwards.

The church at the beginning of the eighteenth century was but small. They chose Mr. Peter Kitterell for their pastor about 1707, of whom it is said, "He was a good old man but of mean abilities, and the church sunk under his ministry. At the time of his death in 1727, it is said, there were only about eighty-six members."

As the pastor of the church was not competent to teach the original languages in which the scriptures were written, the trustees of Mr. Terrill were obliged to look out for a minister of learning, who should become an assistant to Mr. Kitterell; and thus the object of Mr. Terrill be accomplished, and the endowment secured to the church.

Their attention was accordingly directed towards a Mr. Caleb Jope, it is thought a member of the church at Plymouth or Exeter, who was then at a Baptist seminary kept by the Rev. Mr. Davison, pastor of the church at Trowbridge.

The western association met at Taunton in the year 1707, when it appears the Rev. Andrew Gifford, pastor of the Pithay church, at the instance of Mr. Boddendam, before mentioned, made some inquiries respecting Mr. Jope, who had been invited to Plymouth, in reference to his being trained up as the tutor of the academy for which Mr. Terrill had provided funds. The following question, and the reply to it in the breviate of the circular letter, will throw some light upon this subject:—
Question. "Whether it be the duty of Brother Caleb Jope to comply with the desire of the church at Plymouth, or with the design of some brethren on behalf of another church for his further education."—Answer. "That we conclude it is his duty to comply with the call of the church at Plymouth, and that those brethren who desired his education be desired to relinquish any obligation they may have put upon him, and that Brother Davison do acquaint him with the sense of the assembly, and that

Mr. Caleb Jope.

[1719.]

a letter be written to Brother Boddendam, to be delivered by Brother Gifford.*

It appears that neither Mr. Jope nor the trustees of Mr. Terrill, were to be turned from their purpose by the sober advice of the association. The church of Plymouth was not regarded, and Mr. Jope was soon after removed from Trowbridge to Tewkesbury to enter Mr. Jones's academy,† then in high repute, to finish his education for the purpose of settling at Bristol. It is likely Mr. Jope spent three or four years in the academy of Mr. Jones, and was then chosen by the church in Broadmead to assist Mr. Kitterell, and to educate young men for the ministry.

I apprehend this proposed measure entirely failed—on what particular account does not appear. In the year 1714, in September, Mr. Jope was supplying the church in Little Wild Street, London, then destitute of a pastor; and in 1719, June 25, the Rev. Emanuel Gifford, pastor of the Pithay Church, thus writes to his son Andrew, who was then nineteen years of age, a student at Mr. Jones's academy: "Matters in Broadmead are worse and worse every day. Mr. Jope, I am afraid, will not remove if possibly he can avoid it, and I am sure their church

* The following question was proposed at this association by the church at Bridgewater (doubtless bearing upon Mr. Jope's case), "Whether it be not a dishonour to the Holy Spirit to raise up a ministry by human learning, or to send them to school who have gifts to preach the gospel?" The assembly referred to some resolutions of the association at Bristol in 1693 (fourteen years before) which they had printed. These are very judicious: they say, "That we may remove all jealousies, and give satisfaction to all our brethren, that there is no intention or design in this assembly in relation to the education of youth to promote human learning or acquired parts alone, or to make them equal to the gifts of the Spirit, and the teaching thereof in and by his word, we do unanimously declare, that we do abhor such a principle and practice, being satisfied and assured that the gift for edification is a distinct thing from acquired parts; and that men may obtain the greatest degrees in human learning, and yet notwithstanding be ignorant of Christ and his glorious gospel."

† This seminary produced many distinguished scholars. Mr. Pearsall, of Taunton, Dr. Chandler, and Dr. Gifford, of London; Dr. Butler, afterwards bishop of Bristol and Durham, and Dr. Secker, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.

1719.]

Bristol Education Society.

state is in jeopardy, which is a very mournful circumstance : it will be well if they should consider the hand of God in this melancholy providence, and I wish it may be an effectual warning to all, that none think too highly of themselves. God will maintain his controversy with a people who walk contrary to him. If any be left to themselves we shall see what wickedness is in the heart of man. May it be your care to keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. May you frequently study yourself ; for if we see ourselves as indeed we are, we shall soon be filled with shame, and be led to admire free, sovereign, rich, and distinguishing grace in our salvation by Jesus Christ, which I recommend to your prayerful meditation."

It is not difficult to perceive that the allusions in this excellent letter were to the character of Mr. Jope, and to the manner in which he had filled his two offices of teaching young men Hebrew and Greek, and preaching to the church. It seems, too, that Mr. Gifford thought both the church and the minister had, through pride, walked contrary to God, and had thought too highly of themselves. It is no wonder, therefore, that Mr. Jope found himself, notwithstanding all his reluctance, obliged to leave ; which I find he did soon after. " He was an imprudent man," says the Rev. Josiah Thompson, "and in the year 1719 removed to Exon."

The little that is known of Mr. Caleb Jope after this is not greatly to his honour. He attended the association at Taunton in the year 1720. In April, in the year 1726, he was in London, and made application to the society of ministers to interpose for his liberty. They promised to do so if he would fulfil some obligation—I judge of a pecuniary nature. In the same year, October, 28, the ministers were applied to respecting Mr. Jope, by two letters from the people at Ringwood, to which they returned an answer ; but it not being preserved, as it was directed to be, in the minutes, their opinion of him is not known. The following entry, however, shews very plainly to what a situation Mr. Jope was reduced as to the public ministry. "Mr. Caleb Jope having applied to several brethren for encouragement, and they having given him an answer to this purpose, That for some reasons they could not receive him into their pulpits, nor

Mr. Bernard Foskett.

[1720.]

recommend him to any of the congregations in and about town that are destitute ; but if they could serve him by his teaching at school or educating youth, they would be willing as a fellow-creature, and they hoped as a fellow-christian." Agreed that Brother Brine and Brother Dew be messengers from this Board ; that the above mentioned answer has been reported to this Board, and they are determined to abide by it."

Thus it appears that in little more than twenty years Mr. Jope, who was thought equal to the situation of teacher of the academy at Bristol, was so completely a "cast-a-way" as to the public ministry, that while the ministers in London hoped he might be a fellow-christian, yet they would neither ask him to preach, nor recommend him to any destitute congregation. What a monument was the ruined Caleb Jope to the young Baptist ministers, and especially the few academicians among them at that period. It may even at this time prove salutary, if such ministers look at this short account of Mr. Caleb Jope, and as they look at it read the inscription written legibly upon it, " Be not high minded, but fear." I know nothing of the time or circumstances of the death of this once promising young minister, who probably might have been useful and honourable, had not the rich professors at Bristol persuaded him to promise he would become their academical tutor, and not accept the call given him by the church at Plymouth to be its pastor.

Mr. Bernard Foskett succeeded Mr. Jope as an assistant to Mr. Kitterell, and as the tutor of the academy in the year 1720. Mr. Foskett was born March 10, 1684—5, at North Crawley, Bucks, near Wooburn in Bedfordshire, of parents in easy, if not in affluent circumstances. Discovering early a taste for learning, he was placed under the care of a very able master, with whom he soon made considerable proficiency. When about seventeen years of age, he joined the church in Little Wild Street, then under the care of that eminently learned and able minister Mr. John Piggott. He formed an intimacy at this time with Mr. John Beddome, who had been called to the ministry by the church, late Mr. Benjamin Keach's, afterwards Dr. Gill's. Mr. Foskett followed the medical profession while in London ; but in the year 1711, as he had been called to the ministry, he

1724.]

Mr. Bernard Foskett.

left London for the purpose of assisting his friend above mentioned at Henley Arden. These two worthy ministers laboured together at Henley, Bengeworth, and Alcester, till, in 1720, Mr. Foskett removed to Bristol ; and in 1724 became joint pastor. This holy and industrious minister died September, 17, 1758, in the 74th year of his age ; having filled this very important station thirty-eight years. Within a day or two of his decease he addressed himself to his dear friend and colleague, the Rev. Hugh Evans, with a peculiar solemnity and an uncommon pathos, in these words : “ I have done with man and the inhabitants of the world, and I have nothing now to rely on but the merits of my dear Redeemer, who of God is made, I trust, unto me, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; this is all my salvation, and all my desire.”

His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Hugh Evans, from 1 Cor. ix. 27. “ I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.” This sermon was not printed. Dr. Samuel Stennett, speaking of him, calls him “ the venerable Mr. Bernard Foskett.”*

The following sketch of his character was drawn by Mr. Hugh Evans, who had served the church with him for upwards of twenty-four years.

“ His natural abilities were sound and good ; and his acquired furniture, of which he never affected making a great shew, was very considerable. He had a clear understanding, a penetrating judgment, and a retentive memory. His application to study was constant and severe : but though he was of a retired and contemplative disposition, yet he was not so far detached from the world, as to be wholly unpractised in the duties of social life. In the management of his temporal concerns he was inflexibly just and honest ; in his counsels prudent and faithful ; in his friendships, sincere and steady ; and though he was not a man of strong passions, yet, in the relations of a brother and a son, he was tender and affectionate, dutiful, and obedient. His conduct as a christian, through a course of near sixty years, was

* Funeral Sermon for Dr. Caleb Evans, p. 25.

Mr. Bernard Foskett.

[1758.]

most exemplary and ornamental ; so that it may be truly said of him, he had few equals, hardly any superiors. Religion he considered not as a matter of mere speculation, but as an affair the most sacred and important. How serious and regular he was in his private devotions, in his attendance on family and public worship, and every other religious exercise, they who best knew him will be readiest to declare. Nor was his religion confined to the closet, the family, or the house of God, but happily diffused its sacred influence through his whole life. Few they were, if any, of the christian virtues, that did not shine with a bright and distinguishing lustre in his temper and behaviour ; to delineate them all would carry me too far : I must not, however, omit to mention what he was always careful to conceal, his disinterested and extensive benevolence ; for in this, as well as in many other respects, in imitation of his divine Master, he went about doing good. The necessitous and deserving, without distinction, partook of his bounty ; but the pious poor he ever considered as the special objects of his regard. And while he often judiciously prescribed to the indigent sick, he generously supplied them with the means of obtaining what was necessary to their relief. And as the gospel ever held the highest place in his esteem, his charities were chiefly directed in such a manner as tended most effectually to promote its interests ; so that the poor ministers of Christ shared very largely in his compassionate regards, and there were multitudes of them refreshed by his liberality. Nor did he confine his benevolence to those of his own sentiments only, but cheerfully extended it to many who differed from him. In a word, as his charities were thus generous and extensive, so the prudence, humanity, and privacy, with which they were conducted, secured to him the most cordial respect from those who shared of them, as well as merited the imitation of those who could not avoid knowing them. And as he was thus charitable whilst living, so in this respect, as well as many others, being dead he still speaketh.

“ In the character of a minister, he approved himself judicious, prudent, faithful, and laborious. His religious principles, which were those commonly called Calvinistical, he ever maintained with a steady christian zeal. But though he was

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Mr. Bernard Foskett.

strenuous for what he apprehended to be the truth, yet was he fond of no extreme. While he strongly asserted the honours of free grace, he earnestly contended for the necessity of good works; preaching duty as well as privilege, and recommending holiness as the only way to happiness. And with what judgment, seriousness, and affection he insisted on these important and interesting subjects, some yet alive remember; as also the extraordinary weight which these his instructions received from his own very regular and pious example. He was indeed a pattern to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Nor was he without the pleasure of seeing his labours crowned with great and happy success; of which the very flourishing state of his community, at the time of his death, will be considered a sufficient evidence.

“To all which I may add, that in the office of a tutor he failed not to pursue the same ends, which animated his profession as a christian, and his public labours as a minister. He was always studious to promote the real advantage of those under his care, endeavouring to lead their minds into a general knowledge of the most beneficial and important branches of literature. And though he judged a superficial education best suited to the years and capacities of some, yet he encouraged and assisted others in the pursuit of a more finished one, conforming himself in the whole to the professed design of the founder of this institution.

“In the regular and unwearied discharge of all these several duties of his profession he spent near forty years; during which time he suffered little or no interruption in his work from the disorders incident to human nature. But at length, by a paralytic seizure, he received the notice of his approaching dissolution. In these circumstances he continued near a fortnight, still enjoying the perfect and undisturbed use of his reasoning powers, and still discovering the same serene, pious, and heavenly spirit which ran through his whole life.”

A list of students who studied under Mr. Foskett fixes their number at sixty-four; besides one of the independent denomination, the Rev. Herbert Jenkins, who lived usefully, and died at Maidstone. Of these Mr. Hugh Evans states, that “most of those who were under Mr. Foskett’s care approved themselves

Mr. Bernard Foskett.

[1758.]

truly serious, and with great reputation filled many of our churches."

In the year 1795 Dr. Rippon mentioned, of those who were then living, the following respectable names :

Benjamin Beddome, A. M.	Bourton.
John Oulton, A. M.	Rowden.
Edmund Watkins,	Usk.
John Evans,	Northampton.
Benjamin Francis, A. M.	Horsley.
Morgan Jones, L.L. D.	Hammersmith.
John Evans,	Pentre.
Thomas Llewellyn, L.L. D.	
Robert Day, A. M.	Wellington.
John Ash, L.L. D.	Pershore.
John Ryland, A. M.	Northampton.
Hugh Evans, A. M.	Bristol.

The following opinion of Mr. Foskett as a tutor, given by Dr. Rippon, may be depended on as correct. "By such disciples we may, in some measure, form a judgment of the master. And if it be conceded that his method of education was limited rather than liberal ; severe rather than enchanting ; employing the memory more than the genius, the reasoning more than the softer powers of the mind ; in a word, if it be granted that Mr. Foskett was not the first of tutors, it is a piece of justice to his memory, and a debt of honour to the divine grace, most cheerfully to acknowledge, that some good scholars, and several of the greatest ministers who have adorned our denomination since the days of the Reformation, were educated by him."

Mr. Foskett was assisted by Mr. Andrew (afterwards Dr. Gifford) as a minister and tutor, from January 11, 1727-8, for about two years. A Mr. Harrison succeeded him Oct. 13, 1744, and then removed to Newbury, in Berkshire. In his time, January, 1732-3, the meeting being found too small, a gallery was built for the evening lecture:

Mr. Foskett was succeeded by his able assistant Hugh Evans, A. M. He was descended from some eminent ministers in Wales.

1733.]

Hugh Evans, A. M.

His grandfather, Mr. Thomas Evans, was approved by the "Triers" in the year 1653, and thirty pounds allowed for his support. He died in 1688. His father, Mr. Caleb Evans, was pastor of the church uniting Doleu and Pentre churches. He died in 1739. Mr. Hugh Evans was placed, in early life, under the tuition of a dissenting minister, the Rev. Mr. Pryce, a sound classical scholar, who kept a boarding-school of high reputation near Talgarth in the county of Brecon. Here he was thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of the learned languages, and was also made effectually acquainted with his own sinfulness, and with the ability of Christ to save to the uttermost. Several things concurred, under the divine influence, to promote his conversion: when at this boarding-school he recollected his father's prayers and counsels before he left home; the consideration of a godly family of his father's acquaintance, and the preaching of that eminent servant of God, old Mr. Enoch Francis; these things made serious impressions on his mind, which were never obliterated.

Divine Providence brought him in early life to Bristol to obtain surgical advice: here he continued, living with a near relation, and pursuing his studies under Mr. Foskett. By this worthy minister he was baptized August 7, 1730, and became a member of the church in Broadmead, but soon after visited his father in Wales. Mr. Foskett wrote him, advising his father, and the church under his care, to try the young man's ministerial gifts, as his extreme modesty and diffidence would not suffer him to exercise them before the church in Bristol.

By the church in Broadmead he was called to the work of the ministry August 17, 1733, and was invited to become an assistant to Mr. Foskett; he accepted this in preference to a church in London, to which he was invited about the same time. In 1739 he was called by the church to the office of teaching elder or co-pastor; and in 1758 he succeeded Mr. Foskett in both his offices as pastor of the church and tutor of the academy. He filled both of these responsible stations well until death removed him.

His funeral sermon was preached by his son, the Rev. Caleb Evans; this was printed and entitled, "*Elisha's Lamentation.*" "The biographical account of him in this sermon," says Dr.

Hugh Evans, A. M.

[1758.]

Rippon, "though it be the eulogy of a son, is temperate and just." The following memoir is written by Dr. Rippon, who acknowledges himself indebted to the funeral sermon. "Every one who knew him must admit that his gift in prayer was uncommon, his students thought it was unequalled. In the family, at occasional meetings, in the services of the Lord's day, and upon extraordinary occasions, with copiousness, dignity, and warmth of devotion, he poured out his soul unto God; and yet with such variety, that he was seldom, if ever, heard to pray twice alike.

"His pulpit compositions were clear, nervous, and pathetic. Few men were more capable of taking a large, comprehensive, masterly view of a subject; or of representing it with greater perspicuity, energy, and fervour. His language was striking, his voice clear, and his elocution manly. Nor did any preacher, perhaps, ever know better than he, especially at some happy seasons, what it was to reign over his audience, enlightening their understanding, convincing their judgment, and then kindling all their noblest passions into a blaze of devotion.

"After he had many years habituated himself to study, his forte as a minister was an extemporaneous illustration of the sacred Scriptures. This was evinced by the weekly conferences; and we are able to assert that many of his sermons, which his people deemed the best and most useful, exactly answered to this description. His ministerial labours were far extended all around. He had the care of numerous churches resting upon him, and many were the long journies he took to assist at ordinations, and at the annual associations, in England and Wales.

"As a tutor he was not inferior to either of his predecessors. He possessed the assiduity without the severity of his immediate predecessor, and led his disciples into the fields of science by a method, in which hourly acquisitions brought new pleasures, and enabled us to pursue thought from thought, with tranquillity and delight. Every one who sat at his feet recognised in him a friend and a father. He so took us under his care as to inspire affection to him as our friend, and we never left his wing till affection having grown to reverence constrained the filial heart to say, This is my father.

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Hugh Evans, A. M.

“ O what condescension, what tenderness have we seen in him ! What solicitude for our usefulness and felicity has he discovered ! With an appropriate facility he planted many a shrub in the very soil which reason and grace had adapted to its growth ; and soon as its fruit appeared, how did he rejoice ! When we no longer enjoyed the bosom of our Alma Mater, nor rested under his shade, he interested himself in our history : his sympathy lessened our sorrows, and his participation with us increased our joys. What man, since the apostolic days, could have said with more sincerity and accent, ‘ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth ? ’ Well therefore it was said, in his funeral sermon, that it gave him ‘ inexpressible pleasure to see so many who had been under his tuition fulfil his expectations concerning them.’ And that, not long before his death, he spoke with tears of joy to this effect :—‘ I am happy to see these young men rising up, I hope, for great and eminent usefulness in the church of God, when I and many others shall be here no more ! ’

“ But over the annals of this peculiarly eminent servant of the Lord we exclaim, ‘ The fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live for ever ! ’ Through intense application the machine of mortality began to wear out, and the vigour of this holy useful man decayed. But before his dissolution our churches had the pleasure of seeing him attend the association at Frome. Here he took a solemn leave of his connexions in an affecting discourse from those alarming words, ‘ Be not deceived, God is not mocked.’ And soon after his return to Bristol, he closed his public ministry with a truly paternal address from Gal. iv. 19. ‘ My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.’

“ During his declining state, it is scarcely possible to describe his placid resignation to the divine will, his meekness and his affection to all around him. Every passion seemed to be extinguished but love ; with that he overflowed to his family, the church, and all his connexions. When speaking of the prosperous state of Broadmead and the academy, he once said, that he thought he might adopt the words of good old Simeon, ‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for mine

Hugh Evans. A. M.

[1758.]

eyes have seen thy salvation.' He frequently said, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.'

"A student, who was with him in the two last nights of his life, informs me, that for twenty-four hours before he departed, he lay totally insensible. About midnight he began visibly to alter, and appeared to struggle with the last enemy. His dear son, Caleb, was sent for, who came just in time to witness the closing scene. Several of the students were in the room, and his three sons and two youngest daughters surrounded the bed while he breathed his last. The scene was unspeakingly striking and solemn. There lay, in the arms of death, the great Hugh Evans.

"Soon after he expired, his son, (the doctor, who had been kneeling by the bed side for some time, and appeared to have been pouring out his whole soul unto the Lord,) rose from his knees, lifted up his hands to heaven, and in all the tenderness of filial grief said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;' he wept bitterly, but then added, 'for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them:' and indeed all who were present wept aloud for several minutes.

"The evening before the interment, the corpse was taken to the meeting house: the service was to begin the next day at two o'clock, but the house was full before one. A suitable and truly melting discourse was preached by an excellent brother now assembled with us; after which the funeral procession, covering half a mile in length, attended the body from the meeting house to the Baptist burying ground, where the venerable Mr. John Tommas delivered a pathetic address on the occasion. This was a solemn hour, and the countenances of unnumbered spectators said, 'We have lost a friend.'

"This stroke was felt throughout the kingdom. Our parlours, our pulpits, and our assemblies in general, not without many a trickling tear, sighed, 'How are the mighty fallen!' But affecting as was this dispensation, by which the church and the world sustained a loss; one thing consoled us—instead of this father came up his son, the Rev. Dr. Caleb Evans."

This eminent man was born in the year 1737; had become the assistant of his honoured father in 1759, then twenty-two

1767.]

Dr. Caleb Evans.

years of age ; about the year 1767 he was ordained as co-pastor over the church in Broadmead. Dr. Samuel Stennett, of London, of whose church Dr. Caleb Evans had been a member, assisted on that occasion by giving him a charge founded on Acts xx. 19. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind." In the year 1770, in consequence of his extensive influence in the denomination, he was enabled to raise a new society in connection with the former academy at Bristol, to which he gave the name of the Bristol Education Society. Of this scheme Dr. Rippon, who was a student at Bristol at the time, says, "Under his fostering hand the most benevolent men in all our connexion enrolled themselves as subscribers to the institution, and names which add a lustre to any catalogue became its patrons and benefactors." In 1789 the principals and professors of King's College, in the university of Aberdeen, conferred on him the degree of doctor in divinity. He was removed at what may be called a premature age, in his fifty-fourth year. He died August 9, 1791.

The following account of his death is from the pen of his friend Dr. Rippon. "For several months before his illness it appeared evidently, to those who conversed with him, that he was ripening fast for eternal blessedness. His mind was in general much taken up with the employ of heaven. In humble abasement of spirit did he often speak of himself as a fallen depraved creature ; but, when he contemplated his privileges as a redeemed, regenerated sinner, his joy was unutterable. With rapture he exclaimed, 'O the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be !'

"About a week after his first paralytic seizure, he said to one of his students, who now hears me, 'I am perfectly resigned to the will of God.' And it being signified to him, that at the approaching association at Wotton, the ministers and other brethren would be much affected by the death of dear Mr. Day, of Wellington, who was appointed to preach the sermon, the

Dr. Caleb Evans.

[1791.]

doctor wept aloud, saying, ‘I expected to have joined him before this time in the kingdom of my father: he is gone, and I am languishing behind; but I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.’ Recovering himself, he added, ‘If I had been able to attend the association, and had preached, I intended to have improved these words, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” Ah, truly,’ said he, ‘ministers are brittle earthen vessels; but blessed be God for the treasure which he puts into them. The best composed sermons are nothing without the excellency of the power which is of God, and not of us.’

“In the same conversation he most earnestly recommended village preaching, giving a detail of the rise and progress of a favourite congregation at Downend, near Bristol, where he then was. And speaking of the foundation of his hope, he said, ‘As for those who deny the doctrine of the atonement, I cannot tell how it may be with them in the near prospect of death; for my own part, I have nothing to rest my soul upon but Christ and him crucified: and I am now unspeakably happy to think of my feeble effort in vindicating that glorious doctrine, in my four sermons on that subject.’ Thus happy was the frame of his mind, and he was yet alive—and while he was living we hoped; and prayer was made for his life. We made it, and thousands made it to God continually for him. Innumerable were the hearts which ascended to heaven, and, with all the pathos and piety of a wrestling devotion, cried,

‘Eternal God, command his stay,
Stretch the dear months of his delay,
O! we could wish his age were one eternal day.’

Watts's Lyrics.

And indeed there were moments when some of his dearest friends entertained a flattering hope of his recovery. But on the 1st of August, 1791, he had a second attack, which, alas! proved fatal on the Tuesday following. Blessed be God for all the

1791.]

Dr. Caleb Evans.

felicity he enjoyed during his affliction, and that during the last hours and moments of life, with glory in his cheeks, he often repeated Dr. Doddridge's animating lines—

‘ And dying clasp thee in my arms,
The antidote of death.’

Hence those who were around his bed declare, that they never saw so much of the power of the gospel, to support under the pains of dying, as they beheld in the expiring moments of dear, dear, Dr. Evans; who, with an eminently propitious gale, had an ‘entrance ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’

“Thus terminated the exemplary and successful career of our late beloved president, who departed this life, August 9, 1791, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. The Rev. John Tommas, of Bristol, delivered the address at his interment in the Baptist burying ground in this city.”

His funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Samuel Stennett at Broadmead, Bristol, August 21st. In this he calls him, in reference to his father, “The son he was of his tender love and fervent prayers. The piety of that excellent man he inherited, of which he gave early proofs under his parental care and instruction. Of the warm and exemplary devotion with which he took upon him a profession of religion in the church where I have the honour to preside, it was my happiness to be a witness.”

Dr. Evans was baptized by Dr. Stennett, and he was admitted a member of the church in Little Wild Street. The object of his residing in London was to pursue his studies at the dissenting academy at Mile End, now at Homerton: here he obtained the approbation of the best judges as to his improvement in learning. Having been called to the ministry by the church with their hearty good wishes and prayers, he preached for about two years as an assistant to the Rev. Josiah Thompson in Unicorn Yard, London. It is said, “His talents, which were highly pleasing and popular, were exercised to the great satisfaction of his judicious friends, who solicited his continuance among them.” The earnest and affectionate request, however, of the church at

Dr. Caleb Evans.

[1791.]

Bristol induced him to leave London, and to settle as an assistant to his excellent father.

Dr. Stennett thus describes his character: "As a pastor he was faithful, laborious, and affectionate. His preaching was evangelical, experimental, and practical. His manner of address was grave but not formal, animated but not affected; commanding but not assuming. And it pleased God to crown the word thus preached with great success, as appears from the present flourishing state of this numerous congregation. Over the affairs of the church he presided with prudence, candour, and steadiness. He rebuked with all long suffering, exhorted with all simplicity, and with a feeling heart administered comfort to the afflicted.

"But his labours in the pastoral office were not confined to the house of God and the houses of his friends; many occasional sermons he published, and other tracts in defence of the leading truths of the Christian religion. Particular mention should here be made of his late '*Discourses on the Doctrine of a crucified Saviour,*' which you received at his hand with so much pleasure, and which he presented to you and the world as a memorial of his firm attachment to that fundamental doctrine of christianity, the Atonement, which he had ever made the grand topic of his ministry. So far was he from being ashamed of the cross of Christ, that he gloried in it; for it had been the power of God to his salvation, and to the increasing joy of his heart.

"And yet, amidst the zeal he felt for the truth, he knew how to exercise charity towards those from whom he differed. He was no bigot—he could not be such, for he well understood the right of private judgment, was sensible of the weakness of the human intellect, and felt the difficulties of truly upright minds on points wherein he and they could not agree. Every possible allowance therefore was he disposed to make for the mistaken reasoning of others, not daring to attribute what he accounted error to a depraved temper without such evidence of the fact as could not be resisted. And all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, of whatever denomination, he cordially embraced, and was ever ready to serve to the utmost of his power. Zeal and love, steadiness and candour, seriousness and cheerfulness, integrity, and, I will add, the most perfect frankness of

1791.]

Dr. Caleb Evans.

temper, he considered not only as reconcilable, but as virtues which reflect a real glory on each other. With these his profession as a christian and a minister was adorned, while his general character was held among all ranks of men in the highest respect for probity, honour, and benevolence.

“Imperfections he doubtless had, but they were of such a kind, and contrasted with such real excellencies, that they who knew him required but a moderate degree of candour to overlook them; and, although on some extraordinary occasions he might, in a small degree, be carried beyond that evenness of temper he aimed always to preserve, yet such warmth could produce only a transient effect upon their minds, who had continual proof before their eyes of the generous principles which uniformly governed his conduct. The restraints, however, he laid on himself in some situations of peculiar trial, did singular honour both to his good sense and piety.”

Speaking of him as a tutor, Dr. Stennett says, “His good sense and piety, the education he had received, his acquaintance with men and things, and the knowledge he acquired by diligent study and reading, all happily qualified him for this important office. A seminary for the instruction of pious young men for the ministry had been long established in this city; but the respectability to which it quickly arose upon his entrance on this department was owing both to his generous and indefatigable exertions among his friends, and to the great ability, prudence, and diligence with which he presided over this excellent institution. The improvement of those committed to his care in useful literature, particularly in those branches of it which, with the blessing of God, might render them acceptable preachers of the word was his earnest wish; and his incessant labours to that end were crowned with no small success. His sanguine expectations may indeed, in some instances, have been disappointed; yet he had the happiness of seeing many churches in the neighbourhood and at remote distances supplied from hence with able and successful ministers. Nor will those worthy and useful men easily forget the obligations they owe to his excellent instructions and wise counsels, all which they received from him as with freedom and faithfulness, so also with fervent piety and endearing friendship.

Robert Hall. A. M.

[1784.

“The perfect harmony, too, which subsisted between him and a neighbouring minister lately deceased,* who assisted in the academy, reflected no small honour upon them both, while it contributed greatly to the success of the grand object they mutually had in view. The decease of that valuable man was one among the many afflictions which deeply wounded his heart. They are now, alas! both removed, and we deeply lament the almost irreparable loss. God can, however, and it is our earnest prayer that he will, supply the places which they with so much honour filled in this useful institution, by men endowed with the like gifts and graces which qualified them for those important stations.”

To shew their respect for the memory of Dr. Evans, the committee of the Education Society resolved to have the following inscription on a medallion which is fixed in the library:

CALEB · EVANS · D · D ·
SOCIETATIS · BRISTOLIENSIS
PARENS · ET · AVCTOR
NEC · NON · HVJVS · GYMNASII · DIV · PRÆSES

VIRTVTIS · ÆXIMIE · SVÆ
RERV MQVE · ACADEMICARVM · FELICITER · AB · EO · GESTARVM
· MEMORES
FAVTORES · POSVERE
OB. IX AVG. M.DCC.XCI. ÆT. LIV.

The Rev. Robert Hall, A. M. who had been educated under Dr. Caleb Evans, was called to be his assistant in 1784. He removed to Cambridge in 1791.

In the time of Dr. Caleb Evans, the meeting house in Broadmead was taken down and rebuilt, and considerably enlarged. It is forty-nine feet by fifty-eight two inches in the clear, with two vestries, each twenty feet square. It will hold about 800 hearers. In the year 1774 the church consisted of 250 members. The church was originally formed upon the mixed communion principles; but soon after Mr. Harrison left, in 1734, “The remaining Pædobaptists,” says Mr. Thompson, “left the church at Broadmead, since which time none have been admitted to

* The Rev. James Newton

1794.]

Dr. John Ryland.

that church, but those of the Baptist persuasion ; but in the year 1756 a separate society of about sixty Pædobaptists who attended public worship at Broadmead was formed, and the Lord's Supper administered to them by the Rev. Hugh Evans. All their succeeding pastors, since Mr. Foskett, have been of the mixed communion sentiment, and have not scrupled to be the pastors of two separate churches, one composed of those they consider baptized, and the other of unbaptized christians."

The Rev. John Ryland, D. D. of Northampton, succeeded to the vacant offices of pastor and theological tutor. He was first invited by the church in Broadmead, but did not accept the call till 1794. While the church was destitute of a pastor, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, A. M. accepted the call to be assistant minister. He removed to Battersea, near London, 1796.

Mr. Hughes was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Page, A. M. as assistant minister, in 1802. He left and went to Worcester, and was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Crisp, who, since the death of Dr. Ryland, has become the resident and theological tutor.

During Dr. Ryland's time, the academy, which had always been held in a large private house, was removed to the very spacious and convenient, but certainly not elegant building, erected for the institution at an amazing expense, in Stokes Croft : it is capable of containing thirty students, with a library, the president's residence, &c. In the year 1770 there were but eleven students, nine of whom were for the ministry. There have been for many years past, upwards of twenty at one time.

Mr. William Grant, a missionary to India, was a member of the church in Broadmead. He had been an infidel. "About sixteen years of age," says he, "I formed an intimacy with a young man who was a deist, and who has often boasted of his having made me an infidel. With him I read Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, and we united in ridiculing the followers of Christ as fanatics, and persons under the influence of the grossest delusions ; rejoicing that we were liberated from what we esteemed the prejudices of the vulgar. Under the influence of these opinions I made every effort in my power amongst my acquaintance to

Mr. William Grant, a Missionary.

[1799.]

bring the bible into contempt." Mr. Grant with his wife, and other missionaries, Messrs. Ward, Brunsdon and Marshman sailed from Gravesend in an American ship, the *Anterion*, Captain Wickes, May 25, 1799. They arrived at Serampore, October 13, and ten days afterwards Mr. Grant died, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. Mr. Ward thus describes this event in his journal of October 31. "It was but yesterday that I noted in my journal the sickness of Brother Grant; so lately did it alarm me. This morning, however, his fever took a more dangerous turn, and he had a convulsive fit. We were alarmed; but still thought we should not lose him. After dinner, however, symptoms of death were too evident. At half-past two o'clock he died, very calmly, though his disorder prevented our fully knowing the state of his mind. I know not when any death so affected me. We were all overwhelmed with sorrow, consternation, and disappointment. I know not when I felt so forcibly the apostle's words:—'How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'"

Mr. Ward wrote some expressive lines to his memory, which thus concludes:—

"To prove the change divine his prayer is heard,
To India's shores he bears the heavenly word;
Jesus accepts the soul his grace has won—
On India's plains arrived, his work is done;
Content, the way to heathen lands is shewn,
He follows mercy to the world unknown."

Mr. Brunsdon, another missionary to India, was a member also of the church in Broadmead, as was Mr. (now Dr.) Marshman. He only lived in India a short time, as he died July 3, 1801, in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

On Lord's day, July 12, Mr. Carey delivered a funeral discourse at the mission-house, from a passage of scripture which appeared to support him in prospect of entering the dark valley of the shadow of death: "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

Mr. Ward, in giving this account, adds, "May the sufferings and death of Brother Brunsdon, like those of the martyrs, animate others to follow his example; not counting their lives dear unto them, so that they may finish their course with joy,

1725.]

Church in the Pithay.

and testify the gospel of the grace of God. Our brethren, Fountain and Brunsdon, though they labour no longer in the mission on earth, have left us two sons, who may learn the language as natives, be assimilated to the climate, and be the means of the conversion of thousands. ‘ Instead of thy fathers, shall be thy children.’ May God fulfil his promise ! And may this mission, even if it be sealed with the blood of martyrs, make the same blessed progress as it did during the short missionary life of Brother Brunsdon ! Then all its friends will have reason for ever to bless our Saviour for its establishment.”

The note appended by Mr. Fuller shews how prosperous was the state of the mission during the short missionary life of Mr. Brunsdon. “ In little more than twelve months God so blessed the mission that two thousand new testaments were printed ; thousands of small evangelical tracts were distributed ; the chain of the cast was broken ; the church from four was increased to sixteen members, five of whom were natives ; besides a number of other very favourable circumstances.”

CHURCH IN THE PITHAY.

MR. WILLIAM BEAZLEY, mentioned in the former account as the pastor of this church, died August 1736. Mr. John Bedham, who had been chosen co-pastor with him some time in the year 1725, continued with the church till 1757, when he died in the eighty-third year of his age. Mr. Josiah Thompson, who was pastor of the church at Pershore, left it, after the death of Mr. Beazley, in 1736, and united in the pastoral office with Mr. Bedham. In 1746 Mr. Thompson left them, and after some time they chose Mr. John Needham as co-pastor to Mr. Bedham, who as before stated lived till 1757, but was for some time incapable of discharging the duties of the pastoral office. On Mr. Thompson’s leaving them they again looked out for another co-pastor, and in 1752 invited Mr. John Tommas of Gildersome ; this led to violent measures, which are thus related :—

“ In the year 1752 Mr. Needham was violently cast out from his office as pastor and minister in this place, where he was

Mr. John Tommas.

[1752.]

chosen: and went with those who adhered to him to Callow-hill, and were cordially received by Mr. Foot and his people in the time of their distress, where they continue to this day (1774). The cause which produced such a convulsion in that Society was a dispute about the choice of another minister, whether he should be elected as assistant only or in quality of co-pastor. From time immemorial the congregation at the Pithay had been used to have two pastors; but the inconvenience of a co-pastorship had long been felt and complained of. Suffice it to say, that while one was for Paul and another for Apollos, that harmony which should always subsist in christian communities had been greatly interrupted. It was therefore resolved that if they once got clear of co-pastorship they would not admit it again, except in a case of necessity. As a consequence of that resolution, Mr. Needham was not chosen to the pastoral office till Mr. Bedham was in some measure rendered incapable through age and infirmities. When this necessity came, and Mr. Needham was chosen to the pastoral office, it was afresh entered in the church-book, and signed by their aged pastor (Mr. Bedham), two of the deacons, and other leading men, that there should be no co-pastors; but in case of the like necessity, viz. that Mr. Needham might live to be old, or sickness might so impair him, that he might not be able alone to discharge the duties of his office.

“Mr. Tommas declined accepting the invitation to be their preacher, unless he was also chosen their pastor. Thereupon, rather than lose him, they determined to have him upon his own terms, and again run the venture of all the jarring and discord which they had long groaned under as the unhappy consequences of co-pastorship. Mr. Needham, foreseeing the consequences of such a resolution, and apprehending with great reason his life must be rendered very uncomfortable should it take place, remonstrated again and again against a step so counter to their former agreement, and could by no means be brought to submit to their proceedings. At length, after much heat and passion, at one of their church meetings, a person arose, who bore no manner of office in the church, and in the name of the Lord passed the sentence upon him (Mr Needham), pronouncing him no longer

1753.]

Mr. John Tommas.

pastor or minister, or member of that church which with so much reputation he had served.

“This sentence was confirmed by a majority of the church, and therefore Mr. Needham with his friends applied to the church at Callow-hill for the use of their meeting house one part of the Lord’s day. Here he began to exercise his ministry, Nov. 5, 1752. His people had distinct communion some years, but on the 1st of June, 1755, the two societies joined in communion at the Lord’s Supper, which is now (1774) administered alternately by Mr Foot and Mr. Needham, who are joint pastors of that society.”

The above account was written by the Rev. Josiah Thompson of Clapham, whose information, from the circumstance of his father having once served the church, was likely to be substantially correct. Dr. Rippon says, that the exclusion of Mr. Needham and his friends took place after they had gone off from the church, and that the painful measure was conducted in a very lenient manner. It is a little singular that, notwithstanding Mr. Needham’s objections to co-pastorship, after upwards of twenty years we find him filling that situation with Mr. Foot which he could not suffer Mr. Tommas to fill with himself, though it is evident that the great majority of the church were for such a measure.

It is pleasing to add that Mr. Needham, and most of those who left the Pithay, were upon friendly terms with Mr. Tommas, and that Mr. Needham and he visited each other.

The church in the Pithay had two ministers from necessity, as there were two branches of the church also to be supplied on Lord’s days, one at Keynsham, and the other at a village called Hannam. It is remarkable too that they never afterwards had two pastors; neither of the respectable ministers which assisted Mr. Tommas were joint pastors.

Mr. John Tommas became the pastor of this church August 12, 1753, and about four years afterwards the Rev. James Newton, A. M. became his assistant and so continued till his death, a period of thirty-three years. In the year 1791 the old meeting house in the Pithay was rebuilt, and re-opened December 16, 1792. Mr. Tommas preached on Ps. cxviii, 23.

Mr. John Tommas.

[1753.]

"This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes." The congregation paid the whole sum of its erection. He died Aug. 27, 1800, when he was seventy-six years of age.

Mr. Tommas was born at Barnoldswick the 16th of February, 1723-4, near Skipton in Yorkshire. His mother was descended from the ancient and noble house of Norfolk : his father, a respectable gentleman who had met with severe losses, was in reduced circumstances at the time of his birth. His parents were then of the established church, but became dissenters ; and his mother became a member of the baptist church at Barnoldswick, then under the care of the Rev. Alvery Jackson.

Mr. Jackson became his spiritual father, and by him he was baptized in a river (in the year 1740) when about the age of seventeen. In the year 1745 he began to preach, and in 1747 he accepted an invitation to settle with the church at Gildersome. At his ordination Mr. Jackson gave the charge from Isa. lii. 11. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Mr. Palmer of Hull preached to the church from Matthew xxviii. 20. Teaching them to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

Mr. Tommas, being in London at the period when Mr. Samuel Wilson died, preached several times to the church in Prescott Street, and was by the greater part of the congregation wished to settle there ; but as it was not the unanimous desire he declined acceding to their repeated applications.

When he first visited Bristol, as has been stated, to preach at the Pithay, Mr. Needham, the pastor, wished him to be his assistant, the church thought he ought to be joint pastor. He then returned to Gildersome, and a separation took place at the Pithay. Mr. Tommas after this returned and took charge of the remaining part of the church without any one opposing him.

Mr. Tommas, it is said, in this new situation exerted himself with becoming ardour and a laudable ambition. Being convinced that the ministers of the other congregations in the city were men of learning, and also that a knowledge of the sacred scriptures, both Hebrew and Greek, must be of no small importance to one who is daily called to explain them, he so added to the information he had before, as to be able to consult lexi-

1757.]

James Newton, A. M.

cographers on difficulties that came in his way. In prayer, his piety, fervency, and variety were distinguished. His sermons, the greater part of which were written, and of late years generally read, shewed him to be mighty in the scriptures: "a workman who needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." His life was exemplary and his labours successful.

Mr. Tommas served the church upwards of forty years, and had the pleasure, after nearly that period of labour, to see the meeting house rebuilt. On the night of July 30, 1794, he was seized with a paralytic stroke. His affliction confined him to his house till the 16th of October, when he again administered the Lord's Supper to his church. Christ appeared to be very precious to him. He spoke as on the brink of Jordan waiting the divine command to go over into Canaan. The next Lord's day very unexpectedly he appeared in the pulpit. He said, "My appearing here at this time I doubt not is contrary to the expectations of many, but I am come up to attempt to speak for God this morning, from 1 Cor. ii. 3. 'And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.' The words of the apostle are literally fulfilled in me this day. And my first entrance upon the ministry among you was under a sense of much weakness, and in fear for myself lest I should not be found faithful, and in fear for my hearers: and have we not reason for trembling, as the time will shortly come when the speaker and the hearer must give a strict account."

He continued to preach occasionally till July, 1795, when he delivered his last sermon upon his favourite topic of prayer. He was able to attend at a prayer meeting in February, 1796, when the church met to pray for direction in the choice of a pastor to succeed him, and concluded that service by prayer. He was spared till August following: his last days were peace. A funeral sermon was preached at the Pithay meeting by the Rev. Dr. Ryland. After the service his corpse was taken from the place of worship to the baptist burying ground: so numerous and so solemn an attendance has been seldom witnessed.

Rev. James Newton, A. M. became an assistant minister to Mr. Tommas at the Pithay about 1757. In the year 1770, upon

James Newton, A. M.

[1790.]

the institution of the Bristol Education Society, formed for the education of candidates for the ministry, he was unanimously chosen classical tutor to that institution, in connection with the Rev. Hugh Evans, M. A. and the Rev. Caleb Evans, D. D. "which office," says Dr. Evans, "he filled with the highest reputation to himself and advantage to his pupils, to the time of his decease, April 8, 1790, in the fifty-seventh year of his age."

Mr. Newton was a native of Chenies in Buckinghamshire. He was born in the year 1733, and by his pious parents he was trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. At the age of seventeen he went to London, and being enabled through divine grace to give the most satisfactory proof of his sincere unfeigned piety, he joined himself to the church in Maze Pond, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Benjamin Wallin, M. A. As it was observed by his friends that God had given him a remarkably studious turn of mind, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he was persuaded to devote himself to the ministry, both by the pastor and the church. He was called to the ministry by the church in 1758. Having this in view he had received a course of liberal education for several years, principally under the direction of Dr. Llewelyn: when he had finished his studies at the age of about twenty-four he removed to Bristol. His introductory sermon was founded on 1 Cor. ii. 2. "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," and the last was from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block," &c.

His funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Caleb Evans from Rev. ii. 10. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The oration at the grave in the Baptist burying ground was delivered by Mr. Tommas.

Mr. Newton published an anonymous pamphlet which related to the dispute between Dr. Harwood and Dr. Evans on the subject of the Trinity. Also a sermon preached before the Bristol Education Society in 1776; and two letters to the Western Association, one in 1776 and the other in 1779.

Mr. William Belsher was an assistant minister for several years when he removed to Worcester.

1743.]

Church at Callow-hill.

Mr. James Barnet removed from Lymington and became an assistant minister here. He left Bristol after a few years and was for several years pastor of the church at Bradford, Wilts, which he resigned, and is now an honourable member of the church in Eagle-street, London, preaching whenever he has opportunity.

Mr. John Sharp, who removed from Manchester, became pastor of this church. A very wicked minister was introduced to be an assistant, whose conduct, and the separation it caused, it is thought broke his heart.

This division from the Pithay built the meeting-house in the Counterslip. The church is become large and respectable. Mr. Thomas Winter is its present pastor.

A new place of worship has been built for the Pithay church in King-street within the last few years: it is large and handsome. Mr. Thomas Roberts is the pastor.

There is another Baptist church, which has a large new meeting-house erected by a seceding minister from the established church: also a Welch Baptist church.

CHURCH AT CALLOW HILL.

THE history of the origin of this church is thus stated by a Mr. Walsden, in 1743. "The true state of the case of those who are concerned in the design of forming a new Baptist church in Bristol is this:—The most considerable part of them, in number and weight, are such as are at present in communion with no other church in the city; of these some have been heretofore members of some of the Baptist churches here, but have for several years left this communion on account of harsh, oppressive measures, or a dislike to have their religion abused, and their understandings insulted in the common way of preaching among them; in which the doctrines of rigid Calvinism are with much constancy and zeal enforced, and not without frequent reflections on those who cannot assent to them; and these persons will by no means think of returning to their former place whilst things stand as they now do.

Rev. William Foot.

[1743.]

“ Others are such who never have been members of any society, nor have usually been hearers among the Baptists, though they are such in their distinguishing principles. Some few others are in communion with one of the Baptist churches, but are made very uneasy by being perpetually obliged to hear doctrines preached which they judge greatly injurious to the moral character of the Deity, and tending in their general consequences to promote licentiousness; while themselves are frequently pointed at and reproached for not believing them. And the case is, if I may judge from what I have heard and seen, that scarcely any of those who do now generally hear and communicate among the Baptists, will continue long among them, even though this design (of erecting a new meeting-house) should not take place. If their brethren, the Baptists, would have so far gratified them as to have granted them the use of one of their meeting-houses, when unemployed, for an extraordinary service to be carried on by a person they should choose and would provide for, they would have shewn their charity and forbearance by continuing their usual attendance and communion among them, and their contribution towards the support of the ministry. But proposals of this kind have been absolutely rejected; nay, so far was the spirit of opposition carried, that when a few years since they had determined to have such an extraordinary service, their brethren not only refused them the use of their own house, but warmly opposed their attempts to succeed elsewhere; and when, being denied the use of any common meeting-house in the city, they had fixed on a house to fit up for that purpose, one of their brethren deputed from the rest waited on the person who had the disposal of it, and offered nearly three times the common value of it in rent to prevent their having it; though by their coming too late the preventing attempt was frustrated. As to the consequences of their forming themselves into a separate body at this time, they judge it the best foundation they can lay on which to build a hope of being hereafter united with their brethren, when some changes have happened, which probably are not a great way off, and of promoting a better spirit and better principles among them.”

The writer of this letter, the Rev. Mr. Walsden, had for some

1655.]

Church at Lyme.

years preached a lecture on the Lord's-day evening. It was addressed to the Rev. William Foot, who had been invited to become their pastor, and to whose inquiries this was a reply. Mr. Walsden afterwards removed to Trowbridge. The Rev. William Foot accepted their invitation, and formed them into a church state, and administered the Lord's supper to them the first time, April 10, 1743.

It is not likely that the reflections in this letter of Mr. Walsden could apply either to Mr. Foskett or Mr. Hugh Evans; they evidently aimed at Mr. Bedham, of the Pithay, and some of his people. The representation must, however, be received with caution, as it was written by one who was, it is evident, a partisan. Mr. Foot, writing to a friend thirty years after this, June 24, 1773, observes, "Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day ardently wishing an union with my brethren, if I might be received with peace and liberty."

It has been already noticed that when, in 1752, Mr. Needham was expelled or withdrew from the Pithay, he and his friends found a welcome at Callow-hill, and after a time he became joint pastor with Mr. Foot.

The church at Callow-hill on the decease of Mr. Needham and Mr. Foot, became extinct. Mr. Foot was reputed to be of Arminian sentiments; he was a learned man. He published a work on Believer's Baptism of very considerable merit, and a Charge at the ordination of Mr. Sturch at Newport, in the Isle of Wight.

CHURCH AT LYME.

FROM the records of this church it appears that it was originally a branch of that at Kilmington, respecting the formation of which we have no information. In the year 1655 a correspondence took place between those members who resided at Lyme and those at Kilmington, as to the propriety of forming two distinct churches, which, after some difficulty on the part of the latter, was finally brought about January, 1655. A Mr. James Hill was a minister at this time at Kilmington.

For the purpose of shewing the proceedings of the Western

Church at Lyme.

[1666.]

Association, a letter sent from them when assembled at Bridgewater to the church at Lyme, soon after its formation, but without a date, is subjoined. The office to which Mr. Thomas Collier, mentioned in it, had been ordained, was that of a messenger of the churches, exercising a kind of general superintendency over all the associated churches.

“Dearly beloved in our king, priest, and prophet Jesus Christ : grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied in his name, through his eternal Spirit, from the invisible God, and Father of the faithful.

“Dear brethren, we judge it to be part of our duty to youward to give you a brief account of the effect of our meeting : which is, being all assembled, there did appear a great measure of the Spirit and supplication presented to the throne of grace with much faith and fervency, in the expectation of the gracious presence of the Lord to be made manifest amongst us, to guide us in what did or might lie before us. And after some time had been spent in waiting upon the Lord, we were then exercised in the way of debate concerning the chief end of our meeting ; namely, the more orderly ordaining of brother Thomas Collier for the furtherance of the work that he hath been a long time exercised in, namely, in gathering and confirming the church. And first in our debate there was agreement of all, that an orderly ordination of ministers in the church of Christ is an ordinance of Christ now in force ; but in the manner of ordination by the laying on of hands, much debate was spent in differences ; and herein there was not a full consent. These messengers differed. From Abingdon, Brother Pendarves, with another brother from that church ; from Lyme, Brother Goodman ; from Kilmington, Brother Hill and Brother Parsons ; from Bradley, Brother Crabb and Brother Elliott ; from Hatch, Brother Parsons ; from Bridgewater, Brother Wells ; from Bristol, Brother Hynam. These, though scrupling, yet were not opposed. The rest of the brethren having faith to act in it, unanimously carried on this inquiry ; not only stating how their judgments, but affections also were drawn forth to it. They briefly and fully, one by one, concluded it their duty to proceed in a further and more orderly ordaining and appointing our

1760.]

Church at Lyme.

dearly beloved brother, Thomas Collier, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and his churches, to the work of the ministry to the world and in the churches; which was approved by the (ministering) brethren of Luppit who were formerly ordained, and now called thereunto as their duty; being desired by the rest of their brethren, which caused joy to us at present, who are confident that particular churches will reap the fruit thereof in due time to the praise of God.

"Wherefore, dear brethren, we desire that our service may be accepted of you, his saints, for whose sake we have devoted ourselves hereunto, we, desiring your growth in the grace of, and conformity to, the Lord Jesus, yet subscribing ourselves your servants in the Lord, and with you partakers of his holiness."

"Signed with the consent of the assembly,

"ROBERT ALDRIDGE,

"TOBIAS WELLS."

From there being no entry in the Lyme church book from the year 1659 till 1681, a period of more than twenty years, it may be fairly inferred that persecution had prevented the regular meetings of the church. It is likely that at this latter period a Mr. Orchard and Mr. Tanner were the ministers; a few persons were baptized in that year.

At the time of the landing here of the duke of Monmouth in 1685, Mr. Sampson Larke was the pastor, who, with two other ministers, a Presbyterian and Independent, was afterwards executed for having taken part with the duke in his unfortunate expedition.*

In the year 1693 the church consisted of about seventy-five members; twenty-five men, and fifty women.

About seven years after this there appeared symptoms of revival in the church. On March 7, 1704, they appointed a

* Great numbers of pious nonconformists took a leading part in what was called "Monmouth's Rebellion." It should be recollected, however, that they considered the duke to be the legitimate son of Charles II.; but above this the Protestant and liberal political principles professed by the duke attached them to his cause; they were martyrs to the Protestant interest, for having opposed unsuccessfully despotism and popery.

Church at Lyme.

[1777.]

day for fasting and prayer, to be held at Brother Orchard's house at Wotton, "to humble ourselves before the Lord for those great decays of love, life, and zeal that are evident amongst us, and to beg the needed influence of grace."

The next year, 1705, the 17th of the eighth month, six members, who lived at Crewkerne and Bridport, were dismissed to form a separate church at Bridport. In 1707, "for more privacy," they kept the church meetings at Mill-green.

A Mr. John Torr, one of the deacons, was called to the pastoral office in 1708: he was ordained on the 11th of the third month. Brethren Murch and Whinnell, of Taunton, attended; the latter preached from Heb. xiii. 17.

It should seem that the church at Bridport was very dependant upon that at Lyme, as in the year 1707 Brother Banston refused to comply with the church's request, that he would try his gift, "unless the meeting was supported at Bridport."

In the year 1708 a debate in the church, as to the propriety of singing a hymn after the Lord's supper, was decided in the affirmative.

It does not appear when Mr. Torr, the pastor, died. But in 1708 one of the deacons, Mr. Robert Bragge, jun. was called to exercise his gifts. A Mr. John Channon in 1727, who, in 1734, with a Mr. Banear Stone, was called to the ministry.

In the year 1753 Mr. Benjamin Messer settled as pastor; he removed to Grafton Street, London, September 24, 1763.

In June, 1764, a Mr. James Pyne, a member of the church at Wellington, came there on account of ill health, and the next April they called him to the pastoral office. The church consisted only of seven men and twenty-seven women; and the most they could promise for his support was 36*l.* per annum. In 1766, August 13, he was ordained. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Evans, of Yeovil; Day, of Wellington; Hugh Evans, of Bristol; Kingdon, of Frome; and Tommas, of Bristol. Mr. Pyne left them June 15, 1777. In the twelve years of his ministry at Lyme fifteen persons were baptized.

Mr. Mills, a member of the church in Maze-pond, London, came to Lyme Feb. 7, 1778-9. A case of discipline required his opinion soon after. This was on account of a Mr. Nathaniel

1739.]

Church at Wellington.

Cook, who had taken the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England, to qualify him for the office of free burgess. Mr. Mills condemned the practice, and produced a letter from the Rev. Benjamin Wallin, his pastor, who condemned it also. It is added, "All agreed it was contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, except Betty Langford and Polly Swain; and that he should not take his place in the church till he saw the error of his ways; and returned to the church with that acknowledgment of it."

Mr. Mills accepted the call to the pastoral office January 1779-80; but did not continue long.

Mr. John Larwill was ordained April 16, 1781, and staid with them three years, when he left them under a cloud.

Mr. Joseph Dawson, a student from Bristol, settled with them August 30, 1786, and remained till about 1806, when he left them, and settled for a few years at Staines: he is lately deceased.

The present pastor is Mr. Abraham Wayland, a grandson of the late venerable Rev. Abraham Booth. His late pastor, the Rev. Thomas Griffin, of Prescott-street, London, and his tutor, the Rev. Dr. Newman, then president at Stepney academy, assisted at his ordination.

CHURCH AT WELLINGTON.

THIS church was formed in September, 1739, by some persons who had been a branch of the church in Taunton, then under the care of the Rev. Joseph Jeffries. Their first pastor was the Rev. Robert Day, M. A. His father was Mr. John Day, a respectable woollen manufacturer of Milverton, in Somersetshire, a man of remarkable piety.* Robert was born July 2, 1720: when a lad he was fond of reading, meditation, and retirement. In the nineteenth year of his age he was brought to the know-

* He was called by the church at Taunton to preach about the year 1730. He occasionally served the churches of Hatch and Wellington. He died in 1763, in the 74th year of his age, and was buried in the church-yard at Milverton. The Rev. Mr. Kingdon, of Frome, preached his funeral sermon.

Robert Day, M. A.

[1745.]

ledge of the truth by a sermon preached by Mr. Terry of Tiverton ; and was baptized by him in the river at Row-green, nine miles from Wellington, in Feb. 1741, and joined the church there, which had been formed about eighteen months before. It was soon perceived that he had gifts for the ministry ; and in 1743 he was called to the work, and was placed under the care of the Rev. Bernard Foskett, of Bristol, for the improvement of his mind in useful knowledge. He made great proficiency in learning, and was soon employed in preaching to the neighbouring churches, especially at Broadmead and the Pithay, in Bristol.

One of his fellow-students, the Rev. John Ryland, senior, said of him, " that while at the academy he was very conspicuous for simplicity and integrity of heart ; and in his thirst for knowledge, and diligence in attaining it, he was neither self-sufficient, assuming, nor ludicrous. He did not remember ever to have seen him laugh ; that he drew up his sermons with great care, was of a mind clear and calm, generally animated in his delivery, but never vociferous."

When he was about to leave Bristol he was invited to Abingdon, a church in respectable circumstances ; and many of his friends advised him to accept it. But being invited also to his own church at Wellington, which was in a low and unpromising condition, he considered that as the two parties of which it was composed, Calvinists and Arminians, both united in the institution, he ought to accept it, which he accordingly did in December, 1745. He was soon called by the church (as his ministry from the first was very useful) to the pastoral office. He was ordained April 8, 1746, by the imposition of hands. The Rev. Isaac Hann, of Uppottery, gave the charge from 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2 ; and Mr. Jones, preached from Solomon's Song, chap. v. 8. In the first year of his labours twenty-five persons were united to the church.

Mr. Day did not aim at popularity, though the grace and abilities bestowed upon him, which were conspicuous to all but himself, could not but render him so ; at the same time it secured the veneration of the judicious and pious in his own and the surrounding congregations. His other various excellencies were adorned with a meek and humble spirit. A savour of

1716.]

Church at Plymouth.

divine things was very manifest in his life and conversation; out of the abundance of his heart, his tongue was ready to speak for God and his truth.

In the year 1774 the degree of master of arts was conferred on him by the college of Rhode Island, in America.

In the year 1752 the church at Prescott-street, London, after the death of the Rev. Samuel Wilson, were very earnest for him to become their pastor. Mr. Aaron Ward, bookseller, and Mr. Frederick Bull, afterwards lord mayor of London, went to Wellington to persuade him to remove, but their entreaties and offers of a larger income were all in vain; nothing could induce him to leave an affectionate praying people.

He had the happiness of introducing five persons to the ministry. Mr. Thomas Pyne, who resided at Wellington, and supplied occasionally some of the neighbouring churches. Mr. John Kingdon, pastor of the church at Frome. Mr. James Pyne, son of the above pastor, first of the church at Lyme, then at Devizes. Mr. Isaac Stradling, pastor at Lymington; Mr. John Norman, assistant to the Rev. Philip Gibbs of Plymouth; the last four were students at Bristol Academy.

Mr. Day's successor was Mr. Cherry, who some years since left the church, and is still living. The present pastor is Mr. Joseph Baynes.

CHURCH AT PLYMOUTH.

AT the beginning of the eighteenth century this church was at a very low state. Mr. Bryant was ordained over them June 7, 1710. In August, 1720, Mr. Caleb Jope accepted their invitation, and was with them upwards of two years. In 1723 a Mr. Elkanah Widgery was with them for about the same period. In October, 1726, Mr. John Ridley was ordained pastor; the Rev. Joseph Stennett, then of Exeter, and the Rev. Isaac Hann, of Uppottery, assisting in the service. It is said he was very much esteemed among the people, and was an affectionate preacher. He was dismissed to Mr. Townsend's church in

Mr. Philip Gibbs.

[1749.]

London in 1730. In 1737 they invited Mr. Abraham Didgete Hoare to the pastoral office. After him was Mr. Bermick, who continued with them till 1747; his ministry was so unacceptable that the church was at that time reduced, says one account, to fifteen members; another that there were only nine, and from twenty to thirty hearers.

The Rev. Philip Gibbs, who was the honoured instrument of raising this church from its low and afflicted condition, was ordained pastor over them September 20, 1749. Mr. Day, of Wellington, Mr. Jones, of Exeter, and Mr. Hann, each took part of the services on that occasion.

Mr. Gibbs was a native of Kingsbridge, and was awakened to a sense of his guilt, and enabled to fly for refuge to the Saviour, from hearing a sermon in his fourteenth year, preached in a field by the Rev. George Whitfield. Mr. Cennick's occasional ministry at his native town was also very useful to him. When these famous ministers had left, he thought he should not find any other whom he could hear; but a pious lady, a member of the Baptist church, said to him, "Though Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Cennick are gone, the gospel is not gone, for it is preached at our meeting; why don't you come and hear?" When Mr. Gibbs asked by whom, she answered, "By Mr. Crispin Curtis, our pastor; there is a great difference between his public gifts and theirs, yet you'll hear the same gospel." He attended accordingly, was soon after baptized, and became a member of the church; and about three months afterwards he was called by them to exercise his gifts, which being approved, the pastor addressing him, said, "Brother Gibbs, the church calls you to exercise your gifts amongst us; go and do what you can for Jesus Christ."

Mr. Gibbs commenced preaching in connection with the ministers of Mr. Whitfield's society, and in this way was introduced to Plymouth. The Tabernacle not being finished, the Methodists preached in the Baptist meeting-house. Mr. Gibbs, having preached there several times, they invited him to stay among them for a year, with which he at length complied; and this led to his final settlement in 1749, as before related.

"When," says he, "they invited me to stay with them a year, I

1800.]

Mr. Philip Gibbs.

deliberated ; and, though they were reduced very low, yet I found much affection from them : the word was evidently blessed, and the congregation so enlarged as to cause the galleries to be propped lest they should be broken down. Hence I consented, on condition that I might have liberty to preach in the neighbouring villages and towns where I might be invited."

It was not long before Mr. Gibbs' influence was sufficient to procure the rebuilding of the meeting-house. In the month of June, 1751, the new meeting-house in the pig-market was finished, and on the 30th was opened for public worship by Mr. Gibbs' preaching from 1 Kings viii. 59. Towards the expense of this upwards of one hundred pounds was collected at Bristol, and more than that sum in London.

Mr. Gibbs died after an illness of only four days in 1800. He was interred the 5th of December, the Rev. Isaiah Birt, formerly his assistant, delivering the funeral oration ; the funeral was attended by an immense concourse of spectators ; the pallbearers, two ministers of the established church, four Independents, and two Baptists. The Rev. William Winterbotham, who had been his assistant, and who succeeded him in the pastoral office, preached a sermon on the occasion of his death, on Lord's day the 14th, from 1 Cor. xv. 10. "By the grace of God I am what I am." All the dissenting ministers in Plymouth and Plymouth dock improved the event by preaching sermons at their respective places of worship.

The following is a brief sketch of the character and labours of Mr. Gibbs:—"He continued exercising his ministry at Plymouth for more than half a century, and a great part of that time without any pecuniary recompence for his labours, notwithstanding several invitations which he received to situations of considerable worldly advantage. His life and character, religious, civil, social, and domestic, afforded a rare example of unaffected, fervent and enlightened piety, of undeviating integrity, of pure and expansive philanthropy, of genuine humility, of every moral and christian virtue. He attained a considerable knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French languages, and a large acquaintance with subjects of general science ; but every thing was made subservient to his studies and engagements

Church at Tiverton.

[1687.]

as a minister of the gospel. In his discourses from the pulpit, his manner was serious, his observations judicious, his arrangements clear and simple, his arguments close, his language plain, correct, and concise, his mode of address earnest and affectionate. The congregation, when he came to it, was one of the most inconsiderable, but at his death one of the most respectable of the dissenting congregations in the west of England."

A portrait of this "good minister of Jesus Christ" may be seen in the third volume of Dr. Rippon's Register, from which publication the above account of Mr. Gibbs is given. The Rev. William Winterbotham left to become pastor at Horsely. The Rev. William Ragsdell succeeded him; then the Rev. George Gibbs; then the Rev. John Dyer, now secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society. The pastor at present is the Rev. Joseph Nicholson.*

CHURCH AT TIVERTON.

THE church book containing the particulars relative to the formation of this church, is stated, in the one now used, to have been "lost in the late times of trouble;" the present one, dated the 20th day of the twelfth month, 1687, contains a list of names, numbering one hundred and nineteen persons in christian fellowship, from which it is inferred that the society must have been in a flourishing state for several preceding years. In a Memoir of the Dunsford family, given in the Baptist Annual Register, it is stated, "that Martin Dunsford, who was among the first supporters of the denomination and church in Tiverton, called 'Particular Baptists,' settled in Tiverton between the years 1630 and 1650, where he underwent some difficulties, during the civil wars, from the noble principles of civil and religious freedom which he had adopted. After the restoration of Charles II. and the Act of Uniformity had passed, his firm adherence to the sentiments he espoused exposed him to severe losses and privations. Several times his

* The author is unavoidably obliged to postpone to another part of the volume the history of the churches at Devonport.

1811.]

Church at Tiverton.

household goods were seized, and sold to pay the penalties which the spirit of the times inflicted upon conscientious dissenters. On one occasion he was confined, with his brother Thomas, during a whole year in the common gaol of Tiverton, on the same account; yet he steadily persevered in supporting what he judged to be the cause of truth, cheerfully meeting with the reproach and sacrifices with which it stood connected.”*

The present meeting house, which stands upon the site of the old one, was completed for public worship in November, 1732. It is a neat brick building, with an arched ceiling, measuring $44\frac{1}{2}$ by $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Since its erection two galleries have been added, which, with the improvements that have been made in throwing open the vestries, add considerably to the convenience and comfort of the congregation; it is computed to accommodate about five hundred persons. It is held in fee, vested in trustees.

A former volume contains the names of some of its pastors. In addition to those already mentioned, are James Samson, who, in 1714, was chosen and ordained pastor; he officiated fourteen years, after which, having adopted different sentiments to those professed by him at his ordination, he was followed by many of the congregation, to whom he preached, till the year 1737, when he died. James Foot succeeded him at Tiverton in 1728, and continued about two years, when he embraced the opinion of the General Baptists. Henry Terry was ordained pastor in his stead, January 25, 1732; after labouring about twenty years, he died suddenly December, 18, 1759, aged sixty-three. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Lewin, who was ordained September 24, 1760. At the end of two years he removed to Exeter; after which the church was supplied by various ministers and candidates till 1767, when Mr. Daniel Spagne, educated at the academy in Bristol, visited them and continued to supply them nearly two years. He was ordained July 12, 1769; he continued to labour here, with the exception of one year, to March 1800, when he removed to Exeter. The next pastor was Mr. Joseph Webb, from the Bristol academy; he was ordained November 4, 1801. After the short period of three years the

* See Rippon's Register, vol. ii. p. 303.

Church at Taunton.

[1814.]

church was deprived of his valuable labours by death, occasioned by the rupture of a blood vessel. His successor was Mr. Thomas Smith, late editor of the Baptist Magazine; he was appointed to the pastoral office in 1807. In 1812 he removed to London to superintend the publication of the Magazine. The present pastor, Mr. John Singleton, was ordained August 10, 1814.

The following persons have been called to the ministry by this church; in 1701, William Bower, Thomas Dunsford, Joseph Walter; 1763, A. Crisp, Samuel Dunscombe; 1770, John Rippon, D. D. (London); 1771, Thomas Dunscombe; 1805, Samuel Adams; 1813, Samuel Gale.

The Sunday School connected with this place contains about seventy children.

CHURCH AT TAUNTON.

THIS church was first formed in a room fitted up for public worship in part of the premises of Mr. Jacob, East Street, Taunton. It consisted of nine persons, residing in this town and neighbourhood, members of the Baptist church at Wellington, dismissed from that church for this purpose; they were assisted in the formation of this church by their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Cherry of Wellington. The steps which led to this event were, the town of Taunton being very large and populous, and as there was no evangelical Baptist interest in the town, or within six miles of it, the friends of the denomination at large, as well as those residing in the town, had for many years been anxious to have a Baptist church formed. In April, 1814, the Baptist friends in the town united in a prayer meeting, to seek divine direction respecting it, in which they were assisted by Mr. Richard Horsey of Wellington, a deacon of the church there. In this prayer meeting much encouragement was felt, and they resolved to rent for one year a commodious room capable of containing more than three hundred persons. This place was opened for worship on the 21st of August, 1814, on which occasion Mr. Cherry of Wellington preached in the morning and evening, and Mr. Horsey in the afternoon, to a crowded and attentive

1799.]

Church at Kingsbridge.

audience. The latter continued to preach here three times every Lord's day with great encouragement, and this led to the formation of the church October 30, 1814, as before stated.

The meeting house in Silver-street, was opened for public worship on the 20th of September, 1815. Mr. Richard Horsey was called to the pastoral office; his ordination took place on the same day. The size of the meeting is 56 by 36 feet, without gallery, and will comfortably contain three hundred persons.

CHURCH AT KINGSBRIDGE.

THE old meeting house here was 36 by 24 feet. The present one was built in 1799, with an end gallery; it will contain about five hundred persons. It is freehold and unincumbered, through the exertions of the Rev. Henry Penn (who preceded the present pastor), and the liberality of the religious public. There is also a dwelling house for the minister, held by the same tenure.

Mr. Martin Dunsford appears to have been the first pastor; he came to Kingsbridge from Tiverton about 1700, and died about the year 1713. Mr. Crispin Curtis succeeded him; he died about 1768, after having been pastor for about fifty years. Mr. William Wykes, from Northampton, was his successor. He removed in 1776, and no one succeeded him till 1783, when Mr. H. Penn from the Bristol academy was ordained; he died October 25, 1802. Mr. John Nicholson, the present pastor, was settled in April, 1803; he was previously a deacon of the church. Mr. Joseph Nicholson, his father, was a deacon many years, and preached frequently before Mr. Penn's ordination, and occasionally while Mr. Penn was pastor, with acceptance; he died in April, 1808.

The late Mr. P. Gibbs, of Plymouth, was called to the ministry about the year 1750 by this church; also Mr. Richard Clark, now at Worsted, Norfolk, in 1807.

There is a meeting house at Marlborough, about four miles distant, connected with this church, at which there is generally preaching on the Lord's days.

Church at Truro.

[1789.]

The following anecdote is worth recording. There was an aged member and deacon of this church named Thomas Heath, who, during the greater part of his pilgrimage, was much harassed with doubts and fears respecting his interest in the love of God, so that he was frequently called *doubting* Thomas; but in the latter part of his life, though much reduced in his worldly circumstances, and under the infirmities of old age, he was enabled steadfastly and constantly to triumph and rejoice in God his Saviour, enjoying an almost uninterrupted assurance of salvation and eternal glory, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and in this enjoyment he entered into rest about the year 1772.

CHURCH AT TRURO.

WHEN Mr. Robert Redding first came into this country he preached at Falmouth and Chacewater, at the latter of which places a church existed which had been established there by Mr. Jonathian Hornblower some years before. In the year 1789, Mr. Redding being about to relinquish preaching at Falmouth, and the church at Chacewater not being able to support him alone, Mr. Charles Turner, Mr. T. B. Rouse, and others of Truro, being unwilling that Chacewater should be left destitute, and being desirous of introducing Mr. Redding to Truro, came to a resolution to form themselves into a church in connexion with that of Chacewater. The friends of Chacewater and Truro united in giving Mr. Redding an invitation to become their pastor. To this Mr. Redding acceded, and preached at Truro in the morning and evening, and at Chacewater in the afternoon, administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper at each place every alternate month. In this manner both places were supplied for many years, till at length Mr. Rouse found it necessary to give up one place. In consequence of this the church at Chacewater and the branch at Truro gave each an invitation to him. It is most probable that he would have preferred settling at Truro wholly, but before he had decided he was suddenly taken ill and died. This event, so distressing to a people who cherished the highest esteem for their minister, took place March

1820.]

Church at Truro.

26th 1807. After Mr. Redding's death the branch at Truro became a separate church.

When his coming to Truro was decided on, the old Presbyterian meeting-house in Kenwyn Street, built 1708, was vacant. It was taken, though small, in order that a trial might be made to raise a congregation, and opened for worship in the Baptist connexion October 11, 1789. It was soon found necessary to enlarge; the place was made double the size of the original meeting, and re-opened in May, 1791. A gallery fronting the pulpit was afterwards erected, and in this form the meeting-house at present stands. It will seat about four hundred and contain nearly five hundred. It is held by trustees at a ground rent of five guineas for a term of ninety-nine years, determinable on three lives.

Mr. Benjamin Coxhead came to Truro in 1807 to supply for a few months; at the end of that time a division took place on the subject of his being invited to the pastoral office. A new meeting-house was erected in another part of the town, and a considerable number of the members of the original church were formed into a distinct church under the pastoral care of Mr. Coxhead in 1808. Mr. Coxhead's health being exceedingly precarious, Mr. Winter now of Beckington was invited to assist him, and continued in the town a considerable time. The church, after existing a few years, was dissolved and several of its members joined the church in Kenwyn Street.

Mr. Solomon Young supplied for a few months, immediately after Mr. Redding's death, and then resumed his studies at Bristol for some time. After the separation above referred to, Mr. Young was again invited, and came in May 1808. He was ordained June 7, 1810. Mr. Young left Truro in September, 1812. Mr. John James succeeded; was ordained April 12, 1814; and left at the latter end of 1815. The next pastor was Mr. William Downs, who succeeded November, 1815, and left in May, 1819. The present pastor is Mr. Edmund Clarke; he succeeded October, 1819, and was ordained May 18, 1820.

A Sunday School was established in the beginning of 1820, which at present contains about eighty children, the meeting house not affording accommodation for a larger number.

Church at Salisbury.

[1688.]

A church was formed at Grampound about Christmas 1820, consisting of nine Baptists and five Pædobaptists. Mr. Clarke preaches there once a month, and administers the ordinance. The chapel is commodious and well attended.

CHURCH AT HELSTONE.

THIS is one of the churches in Cornwall which have grown out of the benevolent exertions of Opie Smith, Esq. of Bath. He visited Helstone in 1802, and found some Baptists who were willing to unite with him in erecting a place of worship: this measures 40 feet by 21, and will hold two hundred and fifty people.

A church was formed in 1802, and Mr. Joseph Tyso was ordained October 25, 1804. Mr. Charles Sharp succeeded him for a time, and the present pastor is Mr. Joseph Lane.

There are three meeting-houses connected with this church in the neighbouring villages, in Lowerton, Rosevear, and Tregid-den. There are about 200 children in the Sunday schools.

CHURCH AT SALISBURY.

THIS church was composed of persons after the Revolution in 1688, who had belonged to the church at Broughton, which, like many of our churches during the persecuting period which preceded, from 1660, had comprehended baptized people of all the neighbouring towns and villages. I have no materials for the first seventy years of its history, excepting that two of its first pastors were named Minty and Blake; Mr. John Allen, of whom some account is given in the history of the London churches, was there for some time.

1766.]

Mr. Henry Philips.

Mr. Henry Philips. He was recommended to the church by the Rev. Hugh Evans, A.M. who had been his tutor, in connection with Mr. Bernard Foskett, of Bristol, for a short time, about the year 1751. His first sermon was preached at Sarum, Feb. 2, 1766, and he continued the useful and faithful pastor upwards of twenty-three years.

When he commenced his ministry here the church was exceedingly small, and the congregation of an evening did not amount to more than thirty hearers, which probably was larger than on the other parts of the day. The meeting-house was very old and very small, not capable of containing more than three hundred persons. The congregation increased to that number in a few years after Mr. Philips's settlement.

Mr. Philips was a native of Wales, born at Trebeck in Carmarthenshire. He was called by grace when eighteen years of age, under the ministry of one of Mr. Whitfield's ministers, Mr. Howell Harris. When about twenty-six years old he left the established church, and was baptized at Penygarn, at the place on the hill near Pontypool, in March, 1750, and became a member of that church. Mr. Miles Norris, the pastor, was tutor of a small Baptist academy at Trosnant, which is part of Pontypool, and under him Mr. Philips received some instruction; and then going to Bristol, he added somewhat to the little he had previously obtained.

Mr. Philips was employed from 1752 to 1757 in supplying the churches of Wrexham, Namptwich, Whitchurch, and Broughton. At the beginning of the year 1757 he sailed for Ireland, and the next year was ordained over the church at Waterford. Here he continued till 1763, when he removed to Dublin, and preached to the people who met in Back-lane for two years and a half. In 1765 he returned to Pontypool, and soon after supplied the churches of Exeter and Tiverton. He then, in 1766, removed and settled at Sarum, as is before related.

In addition to Mr. Philips's ministerial labours he kept a school for the gratuitous instruction of the poor. At one time he had one hundred and fifty scholars, to whom he taught reading,

Mr. Henry Philips.

[1789.]

writing, and arithmetic. By the assistance of that eminently philanthropic man, John Thornton, Esq. of Clapham, he was enabled to reward them with presents of books according to their improvement. This gentleman sent him money year by year, desiring him in his letters to keep his name secret. Some years before his death Mr. Philips had given away books amounting to about five hundred pounds. At one time he gave bibles to a regiment just going abroad. Some years after as the regiment was marching through Sarum; as they halted for refreshment, one of the soldiers asked a person standing by if Mr. Philips was alive, and whether he knew him? Being answered in the affirmative, he said, "I beg you to give my love to him, and tell him I thank him for a bible he gave me some years ago; and, blessed be God, I now understand it." Mr. Philips had no words sufficiently to convey his high opinion of Mr. Thornton's friendship—a friendship which lasted so long as Mr. Philips lived.* It is said "that Mr. Philips was well acquainted with the good old evangelical authors—they were his delight; and from his very entrance upon the work of the ministry, he gloried in the doctrines of free and distinguishing grace. No one acknowledged more heartily than he, that what he was as a christian, and a minister, he was by the grace of God.

About three months before his death he told his wife that his funeral sermon should be preached from John xiii. 2. "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end." In his last affliction he enjoyed much of the divine supports of the gospel. He died August 20, 1789, aged seventy years. The Rev. Mr. Adams, his independent neighbour, spoke at his grave, and his much-loved friend, Mr. Horsey, of Portsea, at the request of Mr. Philips, preached his funeral sermon.

* The writer recollects hearing the intimate friend of Mr. Philips, the Rev. Mr. Horsey, of Portsea, say, that a neighbour of Mr. Philips's earnestly and repeatedly urged him to say to whom he was indebted for such means of liberality. The good and unsuspecting man told him in great confidence, when the other basely sent to Mr. Thornton, desiring that he would employ him as an almoner as well as Mr. Philips. Mr. Thornton was very angry with Mr. Philips, and it was with great difficulty he regained his friendship.

1791.]

Mr. John Saffery.

The following account of him appeared in the Salisbury journal:—

“On Thursday, the 20th died, aged seventy, after a short illness, the Rev. Henry Philips, pastor of the congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Brown-street, in this city, three-and-twenty years; the duties of which office he constantly and faithfully discharged until within three weeks of his death. He was a man of irreproachable character, and of great benevolence.” The Rev. John Saffery succeeded him in the pastoral office, being ordained April 13, 1791. Mr. Stradling, of Lymington, began the service. Mr. Tommas, of Bristol, delivered the introductory part of the business, founded upon John xviii. 36. “My kingdom is not of this world.” Dr. Caleb Evans, of the Bristol Academy, gave the charge from 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Mr. Kingdon preached to the church from 1 Thess. iv. 1.* Mr. Horsey, of Portsea, (the late pastor, and father-in-law of Mr. Saffery), concluded in prayer.

Mr. Saffery is lately deceased; he is succeeded in the church at Salisbury by his eldest son, Mr. Philip John Saffery. The meeting-house is again rebuilt.

As the following certificate relates to a worthy blind minister whom the author well knew, it is copied as a curiosity.

“This is to certify to all whom it may concern:—That the bearer hereof, Mr. Robert Bestland, was regularly baptized, on the profession of his faith, on Friday, December 26th, 1777, at our meeting-house in Brown-street, Sarum; and on the Lord’s day following, being the 28th of December, was received into full communion with the particular Baptist church meeting in the aforesaid place.

“That we really believe him to be qualified with gifts for preaching the gospel, and we do hereby give him leave, as a

* The writer has heard of a quaint remark made by Mr. Kingdon in this sermon. “It has been said, that the church of England *scandalize* their ministers; that the Independents *idolize* theirs; but that the Baptists *anatomize* theirs.” As Mr. Saffery was a very large man, the church at Sarum were never thus accused.

Churches at Broughton and Wallop.

[1750.

member of our church, to preach wherever he might have a call so to do.

“Signed by us, in behalf of the church, the 29th day of December, 1777.

H. PHILIPS, Pastor.

JOHN GROSS.

JOHN SMITH's mark +

CORNELIUS HACKETT.

JAMES ADAMS.

JOHN MORRIS.

JOHN SMITH, junior.

“The undermentioned members not being present on the 29th of December, they have signed their names 4th of January, 1778.

SAMUEL TEMPLEMAN.

WALTER SAINSBURY.

JAMES HAYTON.”

CHURCHES AT BROUGHTON AND WALLOP.

It has been mentioned in a former notice of the Salisbury church, that this church was part of that which met, during the days of persecution, in a farm-house at Porton, a central village. When they agreed to separate, the members residing at Broughton and Wallop chose Mr. Read, one of the pastors, to preside over them. I have no account of him, nor of his successors, until Mr. Steele, father of the celebrated Miss Steele. Of him Dr. Caleb Evans says, “He was a man of primitive piety, the strictest integrity and benevolence, and the most amiable simplicity of manners. He was for many years the affectionate and faithful pastor of an affectionate and harmonious congregation at Broughton in Hampshire, where he lived all his days greatly beloved, and died universally lamented.

On the occasion of his death, his highly accomplished and most affectionate daughter poured out the sorrows of her wounded heart in some most tender lines, printed, after her death, in the third volume of her poems, by Dr. C. Evans. A few lines will

1750.]

Churches at Broughton and Wallop.

be sufficient to shew the high estimation in which Miss Anne Steele held her excellent father :—

“ Still bleeds the deep, deep wound ! Where is the friend
 To pour with tender, kind, indulgent hand,
 The lenient balm of comfort on my heart ?
 Alas, that friend is gone ! Ye angels say,
 (Who bore him raptur’d to your blest abodes,)
 Can aught on earth e’er compensate my loss ?
 Ah, no ! the world is poor, and what am I ?
 A helpless solitary worm, that creeps
 Complaining on the earth ! Yet e’en to worms
 The care of heav’n extends ; and can I doubt
 If that indulgent care extends to me ?
 Father of mercies ! humbling at thy feet,
 Give me to vent the heart oppressing grief,
 And ask for comfort ! can I ask in vain
 Of him whose name is Lord ? But oh ! the boon
 My craving wishes ask is large indeed !
 Yet less will leave me wretched : Gracious God !
 Give me to say, without a rising doubt,
 ‘ Thou art my Father :’—
 How hard the lesson ! (yet it must be learn’d,)
 With full consent to say, ‘ Thy will be done.’ ”

His eldest daughter, the amiable writer of the above lines, had been known to the world under the name of Theodosia, by two volumes she had published under the title of “ Poems on Subjects chiefly Devotional.” After her death a new edition, including a third volume, was published ; to which last volume Dr. Caleb Evans prefixed an Advertisement, dated May 12, 1780 : “ Miss Anne Steele discovered in early life her love of the Muses, and often entertained her friends with the truly poetical and pious productions of her pen. But it was not without extreme reluctance she was prevailed on to submit any of them to the public eye. This new edition of her works, accompanied with the volume which is now first offered to the public, would have appeared long since, had the health of our Theodosia admitted of her paying that attention to it which was necessary. But it was her infelicity, as it has been of many of her kindred spirits, to

Churches at Broughton and Wallop.

[1750.]

have a capacious soaring mind inclosed in a very weak and languid body. Her health was never firm; but the death of her honoured father, to whom she was united by the strongest ties of affectionate duty and gratitude, gave such a shock to her tender frame, that she never recovered it, though she survived him for some years. Her life was a life of unaffected humility, warm benevolence, sincere friendship, and genuine devotion. A life, which it is not easy truly to describe, or faithfully to imitate."

Dr. Evans has not mentioned an incident in the life of the "pious Theodosia," which must have been most painful to her heart. She had consented to give her hand in marriage to a young gentleman, Mr. James Elcomb, who resided at Ringwood, and the day of marriage was fixed. The day preceding it he went to bathe in the river below the town, at a place called South-Mead, and was drowned. A tradition which the writer, who is a native, recollects, was, that his shrieks were heard in the town; and the place is still called, on account of this painful circumstance, "Elcomb's hole."*

Dr. C. Evans thus describes the death of Miss Anne Steele:—
 "Having been confined to her chamber some years before her death, she had long waited with christian dignity for the awful hour of her departure. She often spoke, not merely with tranquillity, but joy, of her decease. When the interesting hour came, she welcomed its arrival; and though her feeble body was excruciated with pain, her mind was perfectly serene. She uttered not a murmuring word, but was all resignation, peace, and holy joy. She took the most affectionate leave of her weeping friends

* The following inscription is taken from the head-stone in Ringwood Church-yard:—

" Here lieth the body of
 JAMES ELCOMB,
 Who departed this life
 May 23, 1737,
 Aged 21 years.

" Stand still and see how frail are we,
 Who walk with life and vigour here,
 He with one breath suck't in his death,
 Though danger seem'd not to be near."

1734.]

Church at Bratton.

around her, and at length the happy moment of her dismissal arriving, she closed her eyes, and with these animating words upon her dying lips, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' gently fell asleep in Jesus."

Dr. Evans adds, "Her excellent writings, by which, though dead, she still speaketh, and which are the faithful counterpart of her amiable mind, exhibit to us the fairest picture of the original." The following lines are inserted on her tomb :—

" Silent the lyre, and dumb the tuneful tongue
That sung on earth her great Redeemer's praise ;
But now in heaven she joins the angelic song,
In more harmonious, more exalted lays."

The profits of her works had been by her devoted to the purposes of benevolence ; and those which arose from that published after her death, were appropriated to the use of The Bristol Education Society.

Many of her excellent hymns may be read in Dr. Rippon's Selection, and in the Bristol and other Collections.

I know nothing of the successors of Mr. Steele, excepting that Mr. (now Dr.) Steadman was settled there for several years at the commencement of his ministry. The present pastor is Mr. Russell.

CHURCH AT BRATTON.

THE meeting-house at Bratton was built in 1734, and was 32 feet by 40. It was enlarged in 1786, and will now seat about four hundred persons. The church, in 1737, was a branch of the ancient church at Earls-stoke, and Mr. John Watts, who resided at Westbury, was the pastor, and continued so till his death in 1747. This worthy man had preached for several years at Bratton, previously to the meeting-house being built, in

Church at Westbury Leigh.

[1796.]

the parlour of Mr. Jeffery Whitaker, who kept a boarding school.

Mr. Weston succeeded, and died in 1766. Mr. John Cooper was ordained May 1677, and continued pastor till 1797. Mr. Claypole settled as pastor in 1805, and resigned his charge Nov. 14, 1809. Mr. Robert Edminson became the pastor May 13, 1810. The church increased under his ministry to upwards of one hundred members. Two convenient school rooms, adjoining the meeting house, were built in 1818; about one hundred children attend. He resigned a few years since, and is now at Canterbury.

CHURCH AT WESTBURY LEIGH.

THE present meeting-house commenced building March, 1796, and was finished April, 1797. Its dimensions are 50 feet by 40, with three galleries and a large vestry, with school-rooms above it. The expense of the erection was 1300 guineas, and the congregation gave towards it 976*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.*

After the death of Mr. Roger Cator, the first pastor, Mr. William Wilkins, one of the deacons of the church, was called to the pastoral office in the year 1724, and died December 20, 1745. His son, of the same name, succeeded him, and was ordained September 16, 1747; he died April 29, 1761. Mr. Robert Marshman was ordained May 24, 1763, and died August 24, 1806, aged seventy-one years. He was a remarkably plain, but useful minister; he would say, "There be zume ministers who do cut out the grass so fine, that the sheep wont yeat it."

Mr. George Philips, who went thither from Rotherhithe, was ordained a pastor with Mr. Marshman June 11, 1806. After the pastor's death, many of the members expressing their objection to Mr. Philips as his successor, he resigned his office. He preached his farewell sermon April 15, 1810.

Mr. Thomas Gough, the present pastor, succeeded to the pastoral office July 2, 1815.

1688.]

Church at Stokegomer.

NORTH BRADLEY.

THE church here, under the pastoral care of Mr. Joseph Clift, grew out of that just mentioned.

CHAPMAN SALDE.

THIS church also grew out of that of Westbury; the pastor was Mr. William Clift, brother of Joseph, mentioned above.

PENKNAP.

THIS is a good meeting-house, situated in the parish of Westbury, and was built in the year 1810 by the members who adhered to Mr. George Philips, who formed a new church, and chose him as their pastor. He is still living.

CHURCH AT STOKEGOMER.

THE Baptist interest in this place appears to be of very ancient date; the accounts which remain concerning the church are broken and confused. There is an original license, which was granted in the first year of William and Mary, to Mr. Christopher Hawkins, whose house had been the asylum from persecution during the troubles of the nonconformists. His grand-daughter is still living, by whom the following account was communicated.

“ Mr. Christopher Hawkins, a person of great respectability, and firmly attached to the principles of dissent, greatly contributed to the establishment of the Baptist interest at Stokegomer. He left London to superintend the management of an estate, for his uncles, in Buckinghamshire, the day on which King Charles I. was beheaded. His father dying soon after, he returned

Mr. Christopher Hawkins.

[1688.

to his native place, to take possession of the paternal estate. When, after the restoration, the dissenters were exposed to numerous difficulties and privations, Mr. Hawkins opened his doors to receive those in his own neighbourhood who chose to meet with him, and after liberty of conscience was established by law, his house was licensed for the same purpose." This ancient document bears date 1689.

The integrity of Mr. Hawkins secured him the good opinion of a Mr. Lacy, who was a rigid Catholic, and a neighbouring magistrate. This gentleman, who was a great persecutor, connived at the meetings held at Mr. Hawkins' house, of which his brother magistrates did not fail to upbraid him. His attachment to Mr. Hawkins led him to withstand their entreaties to remove, as they were pleased to call it, "the conventicle under his nose;" which, upon the turn of the times, met with a noble and ample remuneration through the interference of Mr. Hawkins, who in less happy times experienced the benefit of similar indulgence. The hopes of the Protestants reviving with the investment of regal power in the person of William, it was difficult in some cases to repress the impulse it excited. It was on one of these occasions that are sometimes produced by public commotions, that Mr. Lacy had nearly fell a victim. A mob collected in Taunton, expressly designing to destroy Hartron House, the residence of Mr. Lacy in Stokegomer. Mr. Hawkins fortunately heard of this movement, and having been apprised of its object, mounted his horse, with the determination, if possible, to defeat it. He fell in with this enraged band, which he arrested in its progress, and then stated in lively colours the important benefits he had personally enjoyed, in common with the Dissenters in Stokegomer, through the kindness of Mr. Lacy. This representation had the desired effect; they gave up their undertaking, and retired. Mr. Lacy, fully sensible of this timely interference on the part of Mr. Hawkins, resigned himself, with all his valuable moveables, to the care of his neighbour and friend. The spirit of the times rendering it necessary for Mr. Lacy to retire, he found an asylum in Wales. Mr. Hawkins escorted him to Bristol, and had the pleasure of securing to him the plate and other valuables with which he had been intrusted.

BOOK IV.

HISTORY OF THE LONDON BAPTIST CHURCHES.

[*Continued from Page 256.*]

CHURCH IN DEVONSHIRE SQUARE.

THE history of this church concluded with the death of Mr. George Braithwaite, A. M. who died in 1748. He was succeeded by Mr. John Stevens, who was ordained in May, 1750. He was for a time very popular, and so great was his reputation, that on the resignation of Dr. Gill, the Wednesday evening Lecturer in Great Eastcheap, he was chosen to succeed him, in connection with Mr. John Brine. He maintained a good character, and was much esteemed by his brethren for the space of ten years; but at the end of that period he brought reproach upon his name, and was dismissed from his office, and excluded from the church. Mr. Stevens published a pamphlet in his own vindication, and was, as is generally the case, however strong the charges were authenticated, thought by many persons to be innocent.

The next pastor was Mr. Walter Richards, who had been called to the ministry by a church at Birmingham, under the care of Mr. James Turner, which gave him a very honourable letter of dismission to the church in Devonshire Square. Mr. Richards was ordained, December 16, 1762; Dr. Gill gave the charge, (which is printed among his sermons,) and Mr. Benjamin Wallin preached to the church. His preaching not proving acceptable, he resigned his charge, April 23, 1764. He after-

Mr. John Macgowan.

[1766.]

wards went to Ireland, and settled with the Baptist church at Cork : he lived to a very old age ; was a man of unsettled principles, and eccentric habits, and but of little use. He died at Cork about four or five years since.

The next pastor was *Mr. John Macgowan*. He came to London in July 1766, at the invitation of the church, and July the 29th, 1767, was ordained. Dr. Gill delivered the introductory address, and asked the usual questions. Mr. Benjamin Wallin gave the charge to the pastor, and Dr. Samuel Stennett preached to the people. Mr. Burford concluded in prayer.

Mr. Macgowan was born at Edinburgh about 1726. After receiving a common school education, he was brought up to the trade of a weaver. He became a preacher among the Wesleyan Methodists, from whose ministry he had received his first religious impressions. Embracing the Calvinistic system, he joined the Independents, and then the Baptists, and settled with the church at Bridgenorth, in Shropshire. Discouraged by the want of success, he was desirous of leaving it ; and this being known, led the church at Devonshire Square to give him an invitation to settle with them.

He lived about fifteen years, and judging from the writings which he published, he was not an indolent man. His talents were certainly of a peculiar order, as appears from the subjects which engaged his attention. He had not been settled a year in London, before an occasion offered for the display of his satirical talents. He published a tract entitled “ *The Shaver, or Priestcraft Defended ; a Sermon, occasioned by the Expulsion of Six young Gentlemen from the University of Oxford, for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures ; humbly dedicated to Mr. Vice Chancellor, and the Heads of Houses.*”

Notwithstanding his ability for satire, he possessed a serious and devotional mind. He had an ardent zeal for the gospel of Christ ; his natural abilities were good, his imagination lively, his memory retentive. As a preacher he was faithful, judicious, and affectionate : his humility was remarkable. He experienced great conflicts in the discharge of his ministerial office, on account of an habitual sense of his guilt and corruptions, which frequently overwhelmed him with shame when he appeared in public.

1780.]

Mr. John Macgowan.

Mr. Macgowan departed this life Nov. 25, 1780, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. Mr. Benjamin Wallin preached and published his funeral sermon, in which he speaks very highly of his deceased brother. It is founded upon Zech. iii. 2. "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" This was chosen by Mr. Macgowan. Dr. S. Stennett delivered the address at his grave.

The following description of his last affliction was given by the Rev. John Reynolds:—

"For my own part, I am not ashamed to acknowledge; yea, I do it with pleasure and gratitude to the great Author of every blessing, that Mr. Macgowan was one of the most valuable and improving companions I ever had the honour of an intimacy with. We visited often, and our conversation usually turned on important subjects, which proved very instructive to my own mind. The natural cheerfulness of his temper, the ease and familiarity with which he communicated his ideas, his great integrity, and unaffected piety, rendered him the pleasant companion, the amiable christian, and the sincere friend: no one more sensibly felt the loss of him than myself.

"I frequently visited him in his last sickness, when he took occasion, as opportunity offered, of opening to me his whole heart.

"At one time he was in great darkness of soul, and lamented exceedingly the withdrawings of the presence of God. Two things, he said, had deeply exercised his thoughts. The one was, how those heavy and complicated afflictions which God had seen fit to lay upon him, could work so as to promote his real good. And the other was, that God, his best friend, should keep at a distance from his soul, when he knew how much his mind was distressed for the light of his countenance.—'O!' said he, turning to me, and speaking with great earnestness, 'my soul longeth and panteth for God, for the living God; his love visits would cheer my soul, and make this heavy affliction sit light upon me. The wonted presence of Jesus, my Redeemer, I cannot do without—I trust he will return to me soon—yea, I know he will in his own time; for he knows how much I need the influence of his grace.'—In this conversation he often mentioned the depravity of his nature, and what a burden he found it:—

Mr. John Macgowan.

[1780.]

‘My heart,’ said he, ‘is more and more vile—every day I have such humiliating views of heart-corruption as weigh me down—I wonder whether any of the Lord’s people see things in the same light that I do.’ And then turning to me, he said, ‘And do you find it so, my brother?’ Upon my answering him in the affirmative, he replied, ‘I am glad of that.’

“The next time, which was the last of my conversing with him, I found him in a sweet and heavenly frame;—his countenance indicated the serenity of his mind. On my entering the room he exclaimed, ‘O my dear brother, how rejoiced am I to see you!—sit down and hear of the loving-kindness of my God. You see me as ill as I can be in this world, and as well as I can be whilst in the body. Methinks I have as much of heaven as I can hold.’ Then tears of joy like a river flowed from his eyes; and his inward pleasurable frame interrupted his speech for a time. He broke silence with saying—‘The work will soon be over—you see what you must soon experience. But death, to me, has nothing terrific in it—I have not an anxious thought—The will of God and my will are one—’Tis all right, yet mysterious—We are to part here; but we shall meet again. You cannot conceive the pleasure I feel in this reflection, viz. that I have not shunned to declare (according to my light and ability) the whole counsel of God—I can die on the doctrines which I have preached—they are true—I find them so. Go on to preach the gospel of Christ, and mind not what the world may say of you.’—All the while I sat silent; and rising up to take my leave, fearing he would spend his strength too much, he immediately took me by the hand, and weeping over each other, we wished mutual blessings. Upon parting, he said, ‘My dear brother, farewell—I shall see you no more.’

“Thus I left my much esteemed friend and brother; and the next news I heard of him was, that on the Saturday evening his immortal spirit left the body, to go to the world of light and bliss, and keep an eternal sabbath with God, angels, and saints.

“Mr. Macgowan was well known in the world, and in the churches, both as a minister and an author. His several publications are standing proofs of his great abilities, and singular talents.”

1766.]

Church at Curriers' Hall.

The sentiments contained in Mr. Macgowan's posthumous sermons on "The Book of Ruth," are good, but his exposition of scripture is much too fanciful: he found allegories where it is presumed Paul would not. His "Dialogue of Devils" is a quaint and entertaining work, and has therefore been several times reprinted. His "Arian and Socinian Monitor," is a tremendous and daring representation of those dangerous systems of religion. It is not the province of mortals to pass sentence upon their fellow mortals, nor to attempt to draw back the veil by which those are hidden, who are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. An inspired pen has recorded of Judas that "he went to his own place," but then the righteous Judge had previously declared of him, "it had been good for that man had he never been born." But for an uninspired man to write the sentence of damnation respecting any departed minister of religion, is an affront against the declaration of truth, which says, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him." And who can tell but what one, who had written erroneously of the divine person of our Lord Jesus, might not, in the last period of human life, have acknowledged, as the dying thief did, the justice of condemnation; and like him, too, have looked to Christ alone for pardon and eternal life! This is certainly a possible case; for "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him."

Mr. Macgowan was succeeded by the Rev. Timothy Thomas, who was ordained September 30, 1781: he is lately deceased, and is succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Price. The old meeting-house has been rebuilt.

CHURCH AT CURRIERS' HALL.

Our former account ended with the death of the Rev. John Brine, in 1765. The destitute church, amounting to about thirty members, invited Mr. John Reynolds to visit them, which he did

Mr. John Reynolds.

[1766.]

in April, 1766. He was afterwards received as a member from the church at Bourton-on-the-water; and, on the 2nd of October following, was publicly ordained as pastor of the church. On this occasion Dr. Gill delivered the introductory part of the service, and asked the usual questions from the church; to which Mr. John Wynn, one of the deacons, replied as follows: "Having lost our late excellent pastor, Mr. John Brine, we have been earnest at the throne of grace, beseeching the Lord to provide for us a successor after his own heart: we trust that he has, in his providence, sent Mr. Reynolds amongst us, whom in private we have called to be our pastor, which office he has accepted, and we are now assembled publicly to recognise the same." Dr. Gill desired the members of the church to recognise their call by lifting up their right hands, which was attended to. Mr. Reynolds also signified his having accepted the invitation by lifting up his right hand. Dr. Stennett offered up the ordination prayer. Dr. Gill gave the charge, from 2 Tim. i. 13; Mr. Burford prayed; Mr. B. Wallin preached to the people from 1 Cor. xii. 25; and Mr. Anderson closed the service by prayer.

Nothing very remarkable attended Mr. Reynolds's labour among his people. His sermons were orthodox and methodical: they seemed to be principally delivered memoriter, with a considerable degree of earnestness which was generally conspicuous, notwithstanding the injury his voice had received from a peculiar accident. One day shirting himself, he unthinkingly put his studs between his lips; on a sudden his breath drew one of them into his mouth, and down his throat. This so affected the organs of his speech, as to render his delivery unpopular; particularly so, if at any time he took cold, when it was difficult for him to speak loud enough to be understood, unless by those who were near the pulpit. His success was far from being equal to his wishes, but probably greater than his own modest opinion of it. He has been heard in the private circles of his friends to speak with a peculiar solicitude for the conversion of souls—if it were but one soul under his own ministry. Prudence distinguished him. No man, among his brethren, was more frequently consulted in difficulties than himself, and he was deservedly esteemed by christians of the different denominations who knew

1792.]

Mr. John Reynolds.

him, both the ministers and the people. The college at Providence, in Rhode Island, conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts in the year 1770. His name never appeared to any thing, as his own publication, except to a discourse preached before the Bristol Education Society, and printed at their request, in the year 1782. The text of it is Ephes. iii. 8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." The sermon is quite in his own manner, unornamented indeed, but serious, evangelical, and full of matter.

In his late years, Mr. Reynolds was rather corpulent. For some months before his death he felt a general languor overspread his frame, which detained him from the house of God.

But in the midst of his debility he went and preached his farewell sermon to his flock, from Psalm xxiii. former part of the fourth verse: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;" and meant, if he had been spared to go out again, to have considered the following words, "for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Through his affliction he was always serene, and sometimes happy. The 76th Hymn of Dr. Watt's 2d book, "There is a land of pure delight," &c. was one of his favourites. 1 Cor. xiii. 10. was a pleasing scripture to him; "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

In his illness his pulpit was filled partly by his ministering brethren, the pastors of the Baptist churches in London, and mostly, for several weeks, by Mr. John Giles, afterwards pastor of the church at Eyethorn (or Haythorn) in Kent. On Thursday evening, in the last week of his life, when Mr. Giles had mentioned to him the late Rev. Mr. Rogers's saying, "I have been the Lord's working servant, and I am now his waiting servant," Mr. Reynolds replied, "I trust with an honest heart, I can say the same." Mr. Giles said, "That death was a solemn subject to the people of God in health, but he supposed it appeared much more so in the near prospect of one's own dissolution." Mr. Reynolds very emphatically answered, "It is really so:" and added, "I have sometimes been entertained with elegant

Mr. John Reynolds.

[1792.]

compositions of divinity, and also with such as have displayed a good taste, free from wit, but full of argumentation and genius." Here he paused and panted for breath, and then said, "But none of these things will do now—nothing short of the good old plain truths of the Bible. The unchangeable love of God, and the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, are the foundation of my faith and hope." Now he was again exhausted, but recovering a little, with solemnity and a peculiar accent, he said, "Here is *terra firma*;" and repeated with much exertion, "I say, Mr. Giles, here is *terra firma* for a dying man."

The ministers who paid him the most frequent visits in his illness were Mr. Booth, Mr. Thomas Thomas, and Mr. Timothy Thomas.

He departed this life February 6, 1792, aged sixty-two years and one month, and was buried on the 14th, in Bunhill Fields, near his predecessors Mr. Skepp and Mr. Brine, and has left behind him a believing widow and two sons. Mr. Booth delivered an address at his grave; and on a following Lord's day preached a sermon to the church and congregation at Cripplegate, from a passage of which Mr. Reynolds was very fond; John xiv. 2, 3: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," &c.

The spot where he is interred is, according to the intersections of the ground, number 52 East and West, number 29 North and South, in which there is a head-stone with this inscription,

To the memory of
The Rev. JOHN REYNOLDS, A. M.
Who, after having been many Years
Pastor of a Protestant Dissenting Church
Near Cripplegate,
With Hope of a glorious Resurrection,
Slept in Jesus, Feb. 6, 1792,
In the 63 year of his age.

An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;
Legions of angels can't confine me there.

After Mr. Reynolds's death, the church was supplied by several ministers, particularly Mr. Broady, now of Bedsels-green,

1713.]

Curriers' Hall Sabbatarian Church.

near Seven Oaks. At the end of the year 1798, Mr. John Wilson removed from Warwick to take charge of the church. The next year, the few people who were left removed to the place in Redcross Street. In 1807 he was dismissed from the pastoral office: since which they have had no pastor; but having let the place to a Mr. Franklin, they worship with his congregation, keeping up, it is said, the distinction of a separate church, for the purpose of preserving a sum of money left to the church. Thus the ancient church, which had been gathered by the labours of the venerable Hansard Knollys, and which had been supplied by John Skepp, John Brine, and John Reynolds, sunk into insignificance, and has now probably become extinct. It would, doubtless afford many lessons of warning to the present churches in the metropolis, could we distinctly trace the various circumstances which gradually tended to reduce this once flourishing church to its being blotted out of the calendar. Wherever a "candlestick is removed from its place, the curse causeless does not come!"

CURRIERS' HALL SABBATARIAN CHURCH.

THE church which assembled here of the Sabbatarian sentiments, was first collected by the celebrated Francis Bampfield, and afterwards enjoyed the pastoral labours of the famous Joseph Stennett, till his death in 1713. Some time after his death they united with the church, of the same sentiments respecting the sabbath, in Mill Yard, then under the care of Mr. Daniel Nobles. In the time of Mr. Cornthwaite, on account of his Socinian sentiments, they separated from them, and at the end of about six years from their first joining with them, assembled about the year 1727, at Curriers' Hall, and chose Mr. Edward Townsend for their pastor. He died in the year 1762. About five years afterwards, Mr. Thomas Whitewood became their minister. He did not continue more than three months: he left

Mr. Robert Burnside.

[1785.

them on account of illness in October following, and died shortly after. They were now supplied by Dr. Samuel Stennett, who was pastor of the church in Little Wild Street, and who performed all the offices of pastor in this church, though he never formally accepted the invitation to the office. He preached constantly on Saturday mornings till 1785. Dr. Stennett strictly observed the seventh day sabbath in his family. The afternoon service, during this period, was supplied for a short time by Mr. Samuel Burford, pastor of the church in Prescott Street, who died in 1768. Four ministers were now appointed to supply it; Mr. Macgowan, of Devonshire Square; Mr. Reynolds, of Curriers' Hall; Mr. Clarke, of Unicorn Yard; and Dr. Jenkins, then a member of the church in Little Wild Street. In 1744, Mr. Macgowan resigned, and Dr. Rippon was chosen to succeed him. Dr. Jenkins having removed to Wrexham, Mr. Thomas Dawson, who had been called to the ministry by the church in Eagle Street, and who went to America soon afterwards, having in that country altered his opinions, and became a Sabbatarian, was chosen in his room, and was for a time so very popular, that the place would not contain the people who flocked to hear him. He, however, soon afterwards renounced his new opinions, and left them. The church was in a low state, when, in 1785, the late Rev. Robert Burnside became their pastor. In 1799, the lease expiring at Curriers' Hall, they removed to Redcross Street, and from thence to Devonshire Square. Mr. Burnside died a few years ago, and since his death the very few members that remain have removed to a Welsh Baptist meeting-house in Eldon Street, Finsbury Square; and Mr. J. B. Shenstone, pastor of a first-day church at Crouch-end, has become their pastor.

Mr. Burnside was baptized by Dr. Stennett, and became a member of the Sabbatarian church, of which his father, and others of the family, were members. He was sent, upon Dr. Ward's foundation, to the Mareschal College, Aberdeen, and was educated by the famous professor Campbell, with the design of devoting himself to the ministry. He had been called to the ministry by this church on the 17th of June, 1780, and on the 1st of July was chosen as the constant afternoon preacher. On the

1755.]

Church in Redcross Street.

25th of May, 1785, he was ordained to the pastoral office, and continued in it till death suddenly removed him in 1826.

The church continued very small and declining throughout the period of Mr. Burnside's ministry. His talents, in regard to the furniture of his mind, were of a high order, but his delivery was far from pleasing; so that it never attracted much attention. He occasionally preached for his brethren, who observed the first-day Sabbath, and always kept up his connection with the Baptist Monthly Meeting, and delivered some excellent sermons on those occasions. He was very pious, and remarkably cheerful; and it is thought had been very useful by his conversations with his pupils, who were of the higher orders in society.*

In consequence of Mr. Burnside's death being so sudden, he said but little of a spiritual nature. His successor published a funeral sermon, which contains a few remarks on his character, but nothing which needs recording here. His publications prove him to have been a very close thinker, and of very correct observation. These were—1. *Table Chat*; in two small volumes. 2. *The Religion of Mankind*; a very considerable work, in two thick volumes octavo. 3. *Differences of Opinion respecting the Sabbath*; published just before his death.

CHURCH IN REDCROSS STREET.

THIS neat meeting-house, at present used by the Baptist congregation of which Mr. Franklin is pastor, was erected about

* Mr. Burnside had a number of private pupils, whom he attended at their own houses. By this employment he obtained a large property; and being a bachelor, and of unexpensive and even penurious habits, it accumulated till he became a man of wealth. He was occasionally liberal, having on one occasion presented to the Baptist fund £300. He left no will, and his large property devolved, it is said, upon his only brother, who died soon after without making any disposition of it: it accordingly fell to some distant relatives.

Church in Maze Pond.

[1782.]

the year 1755, by a Mrs. Masters, a very worthy lady, of considerable property, who afterwards became deranged in her intellects. It was taken by the Baptists in 1761, for a Mr. John Stevens, who had been expelled from the church in Devonshire Square. Here he continued to preach till his death, in 1788.

Mr. Stevens was first known in London as a very popular minister in the Tabernacle connection. He embraced the Baptist sentiments about the end of the year 1749, and succeeded Mr. Braithwaite at Devonshire Square ; being ordained May 10, 1750. While he was pastor of the church in the Square, he published, in 1755, the substance of two sermons, which he intitled, "The necessity of the Spirit's help in Prayer." He also published a pamphlet in his own vindication, of the charges of filthy discourse and impure actions, which had been investigated, and which were proved to the satisfaction of the Society of Baptist ministers, by whom he had been excluded.

After the death of Mr. Stevens, the church in Redcross Street was dissolved. Some of the members, however, united with others who had not previously belonged to the church, and formed a new one. They invited, in 1781, Mr. Thomas Mabbot to be their pastor. He continued with them about ten years, and then removed to Hoddesdon, in Hertfordshire ; and afterwards to Biggleswade, where he died.

CHURCH IN MAZE-POND.

THE Rev. Benjamin Wallin died in February 1782. His successor was the Rev. James Dore, who first supplied the church in December 1782, and in November of the following year was elected to the pastoral office. His public ordination took place March 25, 1784. The Rev. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, delivered the introductory address, and asked the usual questions. Mr. William Dore, of Cirencester, gave the charge ; and Mr. William Clarke preached to the people.

1814.]

Mr. James Dore.

Mr. James Dore was a native of Newport, in the Isle of Wight. He became pious when he was very young, and was at an early age baptized by his brother, who was pastor of the church at Cirencester. He became a member of that church, and was by them introduced to the Bristol Academy, where he spent the usual term of four years, in preparatory studies for the ministry.

He was not more than twenty-one years of age when he was settled as pastor of the church in Maze Pond. His preaching displayed much correct thinking, and his style was neat, even to precision. He was greatly esteemed by his people, and the church and congregation were kept up with much respectability.

In the year 1815 he resigned his pastoral office, in consequence of a disorder which affected his voice. On this occasion a pamphlet was printed, entitled, "The Letter sent by Mr. James Dore to the Church at Maze Pond, on his Resignation of the Pastoral Office, October 1814." As this letter will give the best idea of Mr. Dore's character, it is subjoined without abridgment.

"My very dear Friends,

"As the great Head of the Church, to whose sovereign will I ever wish to bow, with the most profound reverence and submission, has been pleased, for a considerable time past, to render me incapable of discharging the various duties of my office, I am happy to be informed that the period is at length arrived, when, with the fullest satisfaction, I can dissolve the important connexion in which, for more than thirty years, it has been my honour and my happiness to stand to you as a christian society. Availing myself, therefore, of the present opportunity, I do now, by this act, in the fear of God, with cordial affection to each member, and with earnest prayer for the prosperity of the whole body, resign my pastoral office. It is with a mixture of feelings, which I cannot describe, and which it must be equally impossible for you fully to conceive, that I engage in this necessary transaction.

"In reviewing the past scenes of the chequered life which I have spent among you, while I perceive, or at least think I perceive, some inducement to rejoice, I see abundant cause for deep

Mr. James Dore.

[1814.]

humiliation, and many reasons for the exercise of the most lively gratitude.

“Of myself it would be improper, and certainly it is not requisite, to say much. Of the ends at which I have aimed ;—of the measures which I have pursued, with a view to their attainment ;—or the secret springs by which, in the adoption of them, I have been actuated, it is not necessary to speak.

“You need not be informed, for you well know, how much, upon all occasions, I have been devoted to your service ;—that I have sought, not yours, but you ;—that the best interests of your beloved offspring have always engaged my particular regard ;—that it has been my constant care, through the blessing of God, to promote, and to preserve, truth, holiness, and harmony, in the midst of you ;—and that, with a view to your spiritual benefit, as individuals, your usefulness in the social sphere, and your general respectability as a church, my efforts have been uniformly directed, my time completely occupied, and all my powers exerted to their utmost extent.

“It is equally unnecessary to refer to the leading topics of my ministry, to the mode in which they were investigated, or to the spirit with which the discussion of them was accompanied.

“I am thankful for the many reasons which I have to hope that I have not laboured altogether in vain. The number of amiable, intelligent, and active young members ;—the readiness of the church, in general, to engage in every good work ;—and the truly christian spirit which prevails throughout the community, inspire me with hope that, though I have spent my strength, it has not been for nought.

“When I take a comparative view of your circumstances, as a christian society, it is, in no small degree, grateful to some of the best feelings of my heart, to reflect that you are happily exempt from evils in which many other churches are involved. You have no Diotrophes ; no Shibboleth ; no portion of that leaven of malice and wickedness which high antinomian sentiments never fail to produce. I pray God, in his abundant mercy, ever to preserve you from these gigantic evils : for, should either of them once exist among you, Ichabod will be written on your walls.

1814.]

Mr. James Dore.

“ When I take a general view of the diversified, and long-continued, kindness of the church towards me ;—when I think of the warm attachment you have all expressed ;—of the truly fraternal love which your present worthy officers have ever shown me ;—and of the more than parental affection which their venerable predecessors uniformly exemplified towards me, the gratitude which glows in my bosom will admit no bounds. It excites feelings too exquisite, and too powerful, for my very debilitated frame.

“ It is highly gratifying to behold some, who were in the minority when I was chosen pastor, now among the brightest ornaments of the community ;—among the most exemplary, the most useful, and the most highly respected members :—but here I restrain myself ; for I must not, at the expense of their feelings, gratify my own.

“ At the same time, it is peculiarly pleasing to reflect, that some of the friends of my early youth, and who never caused me to heave a sigh, are still among you, in the full possession of all their powers. O the delights of christian friendship ! It is exhilarating to my spirits to indulge the thought that, when my mortal remains shall lie beneath your feet, I shall not wholly die. I shall still live ;—live at Maze Pond ;—live in the affectionate remembrance of those who are most dear to my heart. But the hope of a re-union, in far happier circumstances than any which exist on earth, is abundantly more animating. The idea of meeting in the realms of immortality those with whom we have had sweet counsel here, and whom, we hope, we were instrumental in conducting thither, is transporting to the mind. The thought of contributing, even in the smallest measure, to prepare, were it but one soul, to live for ever ;—to live for ever in bliss ;—to live for ever in bliss which will be perpetually increasing, through ages without end, is too big for utterance ; and I had almost said, too overwhelming to be borne. When I attempt to realize it, my oppressed faculties sink beneath the effort.

“ Accept, dear brethren and sisters, my sincere and hearty thanks for all your friendship towards me ; for the liberality with which you have contributed to my support ; the candour with which you attended on my ministry ; and the sympathy which

Mr. James Dore.

[1814.]

you have manifested in my affliction. To your prayers I am greatly indebted. God hath been pleased to answer them in the aids which He hath condescended to afford me in the seasons of my greatest trials ; and, especially, in those strong consolations which He graciously imparted to me when my strength and my heart failed. When, to all human view, I appeared on the borders of an eternal world, He inspired me with good hopes—hopes full of immortality ;—hopes built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets ; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. That which will constitute the burden of the everlasting song, and which was the central point of my ministry, the grace manifested in the atonement, was the basis of my hopes, the support of my soul, and the joy of my heart.

“ Now, brethren, for the last time, from me, suffer the word of exhortation. Listen to the earnest intreaties of one who is raised, as it were, from the grave to address you ; and who is earnestly desirous of promoting your spiritual good.

“ As individuals, aim to live near to God. Maintain a spirit of habitual devotion. Cultivate an heavenly turn of mind, a taste for celestial pleasures, a delight in those services in which the blessed above are for ever employed. Realize eternity every day. O think, think much, and think profoundly, of the excellent glory of the life to come. To a soul thus occupied, the grandeurs of the present state are annihilated. The charms by which it fascinates are dissolved. The world loses its hold on the heart.

“ In your respective families, endeavour to keep alive a deep sense of religion. Associate at the domestic altar with every corresponding sentiment. Let God be daily honoured. That your houses may prove nurseries for the church, let the Divine blessing be fervently implored to attend your efforts ; and that your children, and your servants, may know you are in earnest ; let all your prayers, your words, your tempers, and your general conduct, be in harmony.

“ As a church, let it be your noble ambition to preserve the high character which, for many years, you have deservedly maintained ; not with narrow-minded bigots, who cannot ascertain true excellence of character, but among the enlightened, the

1825.]

Mr. James Dore.

liberal, and the good, of every denomination. Be regular in your attendance. Neglect not meetings for prayer. Watch over one another in the Lord. See that no root of bitterness spring up among you. Encourage the minister whom you will invest with the pastoral office. Be kind to him, as you have been to me. I pray God that he may be long spared among you ;—that he may enjoy good health, and the full exercise of every faculty of his soul ;—and that his labours may be eminently useful in the conversion of sinners, in the establishment of those ‘ who through grace have believed ;’ and, particularly, in building up my dear young friends in Christ Jesus, in the knowledge of his truth, in a conformity to his pattern, and in the enjoyment of his friendship.

“ Now, my beloved brethren and sisters, commending you to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; to his only begotten Son, the great and only Mediator between God and man ; and to the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of truth ;

I subscribe myself, no longer your affectionate Pastor,

But still your affectionate Brother in the Gospel,

JAMES DORE.”

Walworth, Oct. 25, 1814.

Mr. Dore lived, but in great affliction, till 1825. The writer of this saw him about a year before his death. His mind appeared to be anxiously concerned for the prosperity of the Dissenting and Baptist churches. He lamented the increasing practice of mixed communion in the churches of his own denomination ; emphatically remarking, “ There is no consistent standing between being a strict Baptist, and going back to the church of Rome.” He very greatly disapproved of the establishment of a church, of the mixed principles, in his own neighbourhood ; considering it as promoting schism, by drawing away members from Independent and other Baptist churches. “ They should write over the door,” said he, “ We robbed other churches to do ourselves service.” The following account was published in the Baptist Magazine for April 1825 :

Mr. James Dore.

[1825.]

“ On Lord’s-day morning, March 20th, died James Dore, M.A. aged sixty-one, late pastor of the church meeting in Maze-pond, Southwark.

“ It is forty-two years since Mr. Dore, then at the academy at Bristol, received an invitation from that church, to succeed the late Mr. Wallin; which, after twelve months of supply and deliberation, he accepted. He was born of pious parents belonging to the Establishment, and when a little boy, became decidedly religious and devout, by some occasional preaching of Sir Harry Trelawney: but afterwards an aunt, giving him ‘Reasons in Favour of Episcopacy,’ set him to search the scriptures, which caused his being baptized at fifteen, by his brother, William Dore, of Cirencester.

“ His ministry, in which he too ardently spent himself, was remarkably blessed to a numerous circle, of rather retired tastes and character. Though his praise has long sounded among the churches; yet as by principle he made his own church his home, moving not from it, he was comparatively less known than he deserved.

“ For the last fourteen years he has been wholly confined, and indefatigably nursed by the dearest and best of wives, in his sick chamber: still, however, dispensing instruction, and laying himself out in his Master’s service, and exemplifying the tenderest interests of the friend and the christian pastor; dying (to use his own words) ‘in good hope through grace,’ with ‘Maze-pond’ written upon his heart.”

The following is a list of his works:—1. A Sermon, occasioned by the Death of Mr. John Fly, who died July 10, 1791.—2. A Sermon preached in Angel Street, Worcester, July 24, 1791. Text, “God is love.”—3. The Path of the Just like the Shining Light; a Sermon, occasioned by the death of Henry Keene, Esq. who departed this life February 14, 1797, in the seventy-first year of his age, preached at Maze-Pond, Southwark, February 26, 1797.—4. Letters on Faith.—5. Essay on the Resurrection of Christ.—6. Christ Crucified; the grand Theme of Paul’s Ministry. 7. A Monthly Meeting Sermon, August 22, 1799. 8. Two Sermons on the Mode and Subjects of Baptism. And a volume of Four Sermons.

1774.]

Church in Dean Street.

Mr. Dore was succeeded by the Rev. James Hoby, now of Weymouth : the church at present is under the pastoral care of the Rev. Isaac Mann, A. M.

CHURCH IN DEAN STREET.

THE meeting-house in this street, which is on the south side of Tooley Street, was erected in the year 1774, for the people who separated from the church, which had been lately under the care of Dr. Gill, upon the choice of Dr. Rippon to succeed that eminent minister. They met for a short time in the meeting-house in Maze Pond, until they were formed into a new church, January 13, 1774.

The ministers engaged on that occasion were Dr. S. Stennett, Mr. Benjamin Wallin, and Mr. (now Dr.) Rippon. The sermon preached by Mr. Wallin was published, entitled, “*The Church an Habitation of God through the Spirit.*” To this is prefixed the introductory discourse by Dr. Stennett. It thus commences : “As separation has not long since taken place in the church lately under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Gill, occasioned by a difference of opinion respecting the choice of the Rev. Mr. Rippon, their present pastor ; and, as with their cordial approbation, and consent, the persons so separating have agreed to form themselves into a distinct christian church ; and as you, my friends, thus formed by mutual consent, have invited us to be witnesses of your incorporation,” &c.

Mr. William Button was ordained their pastor on the 6th of July, 1774. His father was a deacon of the church under Dr. Gill. His son William had been brought up in the academy at Northampton, under the care of the Rev. John Ryland. Here he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and was baptized by that eminent minister when he was thirteen years and a half old. He studied for the ministry under Mr. William Clarke in London. He commenced preaching at nineteen years of age, and was invited by Dr. Gill’s people to labour among them,

Mr. William Button.

[1813.]

December 18, 1773. The new meeting-house was opened November 17, 1774, and Mr. Button preached three sermons on the occasion. His ordination took place July 5, 1755 ; the ministers who were engaged on that occasion were Dr. Stennett, and Messrs. Booth, Reynolds, Clarke, Martin, Wallin, and Ryland.

After labouring with this church upwards of forty years, he resigned the charge, July 10, 1813. He died in August, 1821. A funeral sermon was preached for him, by the writer, at Eagle Street meeting, and an address was given at the grave by Dr. William Newman : these were published.

He was a solid, judicious minister, and a worthy man ; but his engagements in business were very prejudicial to his success as a minister. In his last years, he was brought into great pecuniary difficulties, by the conduct of two of his sons, whom he did not properly control. The writer will not soon forget how emphatically he expressed the sentence, not long before his death, the tears rolling down his cheeks, "I have committed Eli's sin, and have received Eli's punishment." His example is a warning to ministers who have accepted a pastoral office, how they engage in a business, which requires constant attention and vigilant superintendence. They had better cast their families upon the care of Providence, than adopt such means for their support. There are but few men who are capable of performing two things so very dissimilar, as studying for the pulpit and conducting a large bookselling business : either office, as good Latimer expressed it, "requiring more than half a man." It is inspired advice which ought not to be trifled with, "Give thyself wholly to it."

Mr. Button was the compiler of a Biblical Dictionary, and the author of several well written tracts. He published also a controversial work in reply to Mr. Fuller's "Gospel worthy of all Acceptation," &c.

Mr. Button was succeeded by the Rev. John Cramp, who had been a student at Stepney. After a few years he resigned his office, and is now engaged in business, but occasionally preaches.*

* Since the above was written, Mr. Cramp has relinquished business, and removed to St. Peter's, near Margate, where he assists his father in the ministry, who has long been the pastor of a church there.

1777.]

Church in Eagle Street.

After Mr. Cramp left Dean Street, the church was reduced to a very low ebb indeed. But another Baptist church in the neighbourhood, uniting with it, has preserved it. This church had been collected under the ministry of Mr. Lewis, the present pastor of the church in Dean Street.

CHURCH IN EAGLE STREET.

It is mentioned in the former article, in the history of this church, that since the erection of the meeting-house in 1737, it had been twice enlarged, first in 1760, and again in 1820. That account principally consisted of the history of Dr. Andrew Gifford, its first pastor, who died in 1784. It may not be improper to add to that account the names of those members of the church who were called to the ministry during Dr. Gifford's time.

1. Mr. James Wair. In 1749, at the request of the church at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, dismissed to them "after being by the church recommended to the grace of God." He afterwards left Newcastle, and settled at Birmingham.

2. Mr. Robert Macgregor. In 1756 he was dismissed to the church at Woolwich, and was for many years, till the time of his death, a very respectable and useful minister in that town.

3. Mr. Joseph Gwennap. He was a nephew of Dr. Gifford. He first settled at Saffron Walden. In 1764, he was earnestly requested by the church in Eagle Street to become an assistant to Dr. Gifford; but at the remonstrance of his church, the plan was relinquished. He was for several years a very popular minister; and about the year 1790, was pastor of a church in Piccadilly, London. At length he relinquished the ministry, and joined the Moravians. He died a few years since at Walworth.

4. Mr. John Langford. He was dismissed to a church in Blackfield. He was a very popular minister, but lost his reputation, it is said, by mortgaging a house a second time. He preached

Mr. Ebenezer Smith.

[1782.]

for some years at Portsea, and raised a new Baptist congregation there. He had a large family, and was very poor. It is said, that before his death he was reduced so low, that he even begged his livelihood in London.

5. Mr. Samuel Medley. In 1764 he was called to preach; and soon after settled as pastor of the church at Watford. He afterwards removed to Liverpool, where he laboured till the time of his death. Dr. Gifford was very fond of him, and at one period greatly wished him as an assistant.

6. Mr. Thomas Dawson. In 1764 he spoke before the church, and was encouraged to preach. He went soon after to America; on his return he was a Sabbatarian, but he soon gave up those opinions: he died three or four years ago in London.

7. Mr. — Short. In 1767 he was encouraged by the church to “exercise his gifts wherever the providence of God should call him to it, by the request of the people of God.” It is added, “And it is our request and advice that he do not do it otherwise.”

8. Mr. John Lloyd. In 1768 he was encouraged to preach. He was settled for many years at Tenterden, and then at Colnbrook, where he died.

From a manuscript before me, I copy some particulars, which I consider creditable to the character of the church, and to have contributed largely towards supporting the purity of its doctrine, and preserving the church and congregation. “In the year 1777, Mr. Ebenezer Smith, who had for several years been an assistant minister to Dr. Gifford, embraced the Arian scheme of doctrine, and was on that account, after several ineffectual attempts on the part of the church to restore him to orthodoxy, dismissed from his office in 1783.”

An extract or two from a letter written by Mr. Smith to Dr. Gifford (the original is before me), dated Sheffield, May 29, 1782, will shew the respect felt by that gentleman toward the pastor and the church. Mr. Smith says,

‘I trust, Sir, you will not construe my not early acquainting you with the doubts I had on this subject, as an instance of disrespect and youthful presumption; it was by the united request

1782.]

Mr. Ebenezer Smith.

of my friends that I did not open my mind to you, as they thought it would only disturb and afflict you, and that I should soon see reason for returning to my former sentiments. I therefore crave your candid interpretation of this part of my conduct.

“My dear Sir,—I thank you for every instance of your regard I have experienced, and the thoughts of the dissolution of my connexion with you, and the church under your care, oppresses me beyond measure. You will be so good as to present my love to the people when they meet. I request their prayers, that I may have light into the will of God, and that if I have erred, I may be brought back again with weeping and supplication; and at the same time let them be informed, that I do not feel, in my own experience, those terrible consequences resulting from the sentiments I now receive, which are charged upon it. I am much affected by the trouble into which many of them will be brought, by what they deem my apostasy from the truth as it is in Jesus. Could I judge it to be so, there would be no occasion for the present address.

“If you would favour me with a line, I should receive it with great thankfulness. I hope you will not forget me at the throne of grace. May the Lord bless you abundantly, make the remaining part of your life happy, with the light of his countenance, and at length receive you to that glory, where we shall no longer labour under imperfection and darkness, but see as we are seen, and know as we are known: the thought of that state is the chief comfort I at present experience.

“With most sincere respect, I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your's most affectionately,

“EBENEZER SMITH.”

The document in the church book dismissing Mr. Smith is in the feeble hand-writing of Dr. Gifford, who was then in his eighty-third year, and his name is the first signed to it.

Mr. Smith after a time gave up the ministry, and took to his father's business at Chesterfield, in Derbyshire. He died a few

Church in Eagle Street.

[1782.]

years since ; and if the writer has been correctly informed, had returned, in the latter years of his life, to the Trinitarian sentiments. A letter written to him in 1782, by the venerable Abraham Booth, on the absurdities of the Arian hypothesis, was printed in the Baptist Magazine, vol. ii.

The zeal of this church for orthodoxy of sentiment had been evinced on several previous occasions. The next year after they met in Eagle Street, a Mr. Lacy was excluded for having avowed Arian sentiments. The church withdrew from him, they say, "as one that does not 'hold the Head ;' till the Lord shall give him repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth."

In the year 1766, the church displayed equal wisdom and firmness, on a subject of much less importance, it is acknowledged, but which shewed their regard to *scriptural terms of communion only*. They considered baptism to be a term of communion, because it is a positive institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be observed before that of the Lord's Supper ; and because the apostles always enjoined it as the first act of homage to his supreme authority upon all his disciples ; and because the churches which were formed under their inspection, were composed alone of baptized persons ; but while they did this, they did not consider *national customs*, applicable only to eastern countries, as binding on christians in places where no valuable purpose was to be answered by an imitation of them. The case of discipline referred to, is thus entered in the records: "At the church-meeting, August 13, 1766, Brother Platt informed the church that he and his wife could not, in conscience, hold communion with us, unless we came into the practice of *washing one another's feet, and exercising the practice of the kiss of charity*. And the church, at the same church-meeting, resolved, that they cannot comply with either of those practices."

In 1773, a Mr. Coad, who was an occasional preacher, avowed his opinion that "he believed God to be the author of sin." The church called him before them at a church-meeting, when both he and his wife declared it to be their sentiment, but said they had no wish to break the peace of the church, and were unwilling to do so. "It was resolved, that they be requested to withdraw themselves ; and if they did not, that the church would

1785.]

Mr. Thomas Hopkins.

withdraw from them till they saw their error, and confess the same." It is pleasing to add, that both these persons afterwards confessed their errors, and were restored.

Dr. Gifford's successor in the pastoral office was Mr. Thomas Hopkins. He had supplied three months previously to the death of Dr. Gifford, who is reported to have said of him, "That's the man for Eagle Street." Mr. Hopkins was called to the pastoral office in April, 1785, and was ordained July 13. On this occasion, Mr. Booth gave the charge * to the minister; and Mr. (now Dr.) Rippon preached to the church.

Several respectable persons withdrew from the church at this time, from not being satisfied with the ministry of Mr. Hopkins, and joined the church in Grafton Street, under Mr. John Martin. One of these was Mr. William Ashlin, whose munificence in building the handsome meeting-house for that church has been already noticed.

Mr. Hopkins's ministry was short. He lived only two years and four months, but during that period one hundred and seven persons joined the church; many of these had belonged to a church in the Adelphi, which was about that time broken up. Mr. Hopkins died November 26, 1787. This worthy and pious minister was a native of Frome. He began preaching among the Independents, and for a time assisted Mr. Sloper at Devizes. The change of his sentiments on the subject of Baptism being known, led to his being invited to Eagle Street at the time before mentioned.† He was a humble, devoted man. He commenced preaching, after his ordination, from Rom. xv. 29: "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." His last sermon was from Heb. ii. 3: "How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation."

He had to walk afterwards through the rain to his house at

* This admirable charge of Mr. Booth's was published many years afterwards, and is well known by the title of "*Pastoral Cautions*."

† The address written by him on the change of his opinions, intended to have been read to the church at Devizes, was printed in the *Baptist Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 45—49.

Church in Keppel Street.

[1773.]

Battle-bridge, and took cold : a fever followed, and in a few days he was removed by death.

Mr. William Smith succeeded Mr. Hopkins, by an almost unanimous invitation to the pastoral office. He was solemnly set apart to this office May 27, 1789. For several years he was happy in his connexion ; but in October, 1801, he sent in his resignation to the church, which was accepted—perhaps unexpectedly. None who have perused the letter, however, could imagine, from the terms in which it is expressed, but that it was designed as a final farewell. Were it otherwise, the pastor who could employ art on such an occasion, was justly served. Mr. Smith, after a few years, settled with the church at Derby : when he left it, he resided at Shrewsbury, where he died.

Two members were sent into the ministry during this period, Mr. William Shenston, pastor of the church in Little Alie Street, and Mr. William Groser, who was settled for many years at Watford, and who, on leaving it, became pastor of the church at Brentford, where he died.

The church was destitute of a pastor nearly four years, when the writer, after about six months probationary services, was ordained January 16, 1805 :—and “having obtained help of God, he continues till this day.” June 29, 1829.

CHURCH IN KEPPEL STREET.

WE brought down the history of the church in Grafton Street till the death of Mr. Messer. The Rev. John Martin was the next pastor. He was born at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, March 15, 1741. He seems to have obtained a tolerably good education in early life. He was called by grace before he was twenty years of age. In the year 1763 he became convinced of the duty of believer's baptism, and published a pamphlet entitled, “*Mechanicus and Flaven ; or the Watch Spiritualized.*” This odd

1773.]

Mr. John Martin.

circumstance led to his being invited to preach at Peterborough. Soon after which he was baptized by the Rev. Mr. Clark, of Blenheim, in a garden; and by the church at Gambingly was soon after called to the ministry. In 1764, I find him preaching at Whittlesea and Peterborough for a few months; and then, from November, 1764, to May, 1765, to the Independent congregation at Kimbolton, of which the Rev. Lewis Wayman had been pastor. He was invited to Lymington in Hampshire, but did not go, as he had accepted an invitation to Sheepshead, a large village four miles from Loughborough, where he succeeded an aged Baptist minister, who had for many years been pastor of the church, the Rev. William Christian.

Mr. Martin was ordained over that church August, 1766. Mr. Browne of Kettering gave him the charge, from Acts xx. 28: and the Rev. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, preached to the church from 1 Thess. iii. 8.

While pastor here, he wrote a circular letter, at the request of the Association of Churches, held in the year 1770, at Kettering. The subject was Election. It was this union of churches which, in less than thirty years afterwards, produced the Baptist Missionary Society.

In this obscure situation Mr. Martin was found at the time of Mr. Messer's death; but he was well known, as he had preached at several places in London in 1770, when he was collecting for the meeting-house at Sheepshead. And in the year 1771, after the death of Dr. Gill, he had supplied the destitute church in Carter Lane for a few weeks. Speaking of the invitation to succeed Mr. Messer, Mr. Martin says, "I was more surprised at that invitation than any other; for when I was in London, in the year 1770, I refused to preach to them, though strongly pressed to comply with their request, because it appeared to me they had used their former pastor, the Rev. Mr. Anderson, unkindly in his old age. But in the year 1771, I preached more than once for Mr. Messer."

Mr. Martin visited the church in 1773. "The visit," says Mr. M. "proved more acceptable than I had foreseen. It procured for me a written and respectful invitation to return to town; to which, after consulting many friends upon it, I wrote

Mr. John Martin.

[1774.]

an answer," &c. In this he accepted their invitation for six months, and finally brought his family to London the 19th of October, 1773.

A call was given him to undertake the pastoral office, February 14, 1774, signed by one hundred and fourteen persons. In his answer, in which he accepted their invitation, were the following remarks respecting the means of his future subsistence. "As to temporalities, I doubt not, but whatsoever collected, or any other way received for my use, will be faithfully and cheerfully communicated to me by your deacons. If that should at any time be insufficient to maintain my family with reputation, I hope, on proper notice of it, with evidence of the fact, you will, if it be in your power, make up such deficiency; and if at any time it exceed what I have mentioned, I hope the Lord will enable me to make it manifest, that it is given me with his blessing; and that wherein I am successful, I desire to be useful."

It ought to be recorded to the honour of the church, that they acted upon these suggestions, and entered the following resolution in their church book. "Agreed, that Mr. Martin may have the liberty to choose, from time to time, any two of the deacons to collect and pay to him what they may receive for his use."

The public ordination took place March 31, 1744. Mr. Benjamin Wallin introduced the services of the day, asked the necessary questions, and received Mr. Martin's confession of faith. Mr. Booth gave him the charge, from Tit. iii. 8, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." Mr. Macgowan preached to the church from Ephes. v. 15: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

This union was not long maintained. Mr. Martin had vindicated the character of their late aged pastor, Mr. Anderson, and attempted to bring about a closer union with those ministers of the denomination, "which," says Mr. Martin, "had a just respect for the memory of the good old man." The difference of his opinion on this and some other subjects, between himself and some of the members, led to warm and unhappy altercations. "At length," says he, "wearied with vexatious debates, of which

1776.]

Mr. John Martin.

there seemed to be no end, I ventured to preach a sermon from these words : ‘ And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen ; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee ? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me ; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left,’ Gen. xiii. 8, 9. This sermon was well received, and bid fair to bring about a reconciliation. But this prospect proved to be fallacious. On the 29th of October, 1776, a separation took place. A third part of the members, amounting to seventy-three, went away, and were allowed and paid, on account of their interest in the meeting-house in Grafton Street, the sum of three hundred pounds by those who remained, ‘ on condition that no part of the money should be applied to any other purpose than to carry on a separate state of public worship in London.’ As to what remains,” adds Mr. Martin, “ of this unpleasant story, it is well known, that they who separated from Grafton Street were soon divided among themselves, and unable to keep together in the new meeting which they built in the Adelphi, and I believe that not so much as three persons out of the seventy-three who went from us now, (1797) meet together statedly in any place of worship, if I except the few who have long since returned to us again in peace.”

The success which attended the ministry of Mr. Martin, and the place in Grafton Street being considered by many an uncomfortable place, a new meeting-house was built in Keppel Street, near Bedford Square, in the year 1795.

Mr. Martin was so unhappy as to give great offence to his brethren in the ministry, in the year 1799, as has been mentioned in the history of that period ; he himself has narrated another public offence in the following manner :—“ In December, 1789, the general body of Dissenting Ministers in London met at their Library in Redcross Street, to consider of the measures proper to be adopted to express their concurrence with their brethren in the country, in their resolution occasioned by their application to Parliament for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Having been for many years a member of their society, I took it for granted

Mr. John Martin.

[1789.]

that I had a right to deliver my opinion freely in the debate which this business produced ; but I was not permitted. I therefore thought it my duty to publish my intended speech, and this publication (in 1790) procured me more praise and blame than any thing I had printed. The addition now made to my real friends, or to those who have shewed themselves friendly to me, was not foreseen ; but the increase of those who rose up against me was expected.” *

The “new friends,” whom Mr. Martin refers to, I suppose, were some of His Majesty’s ministers, and some of the right reverend bench of bishops, with whose policy, in regard to the exclusion of Dissenters from all places of honour, trust, and profit under the government, Mr. Martin fully agreed. The Dissenting ministers were greatly offended, and no wonder ; they could have borne it from an enemy, but not from a brother and companion !

In the year 1796, the Administration thought Mr. Martin one whom they should honour with a mark of their confidence. They therefore gave him the warrant from the Treasury to distribute what was then called the *Regium Donum*. Mr. Martin thus states the history of this affair :—

“After Dr. Stennett’s decease, I wished to be his successor to ministers of my own denomination. To obtain that honour, I applied to Mr. Pitt, who was then First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The learned gentlemen, by whom I applied to him for that favour, were well known to Mr.

* The author has often heard the conduct of Mr. Martin, at the meeting at the Library, on this occasion, thus described. A young Presbyterian minister had delivered himself with some warmth in regard to the unjust nature and oppressive operation of the Test Laws, and concluded by saying, that “he had taken the liberty to give his opinions freely, though he might be considered as a contemptible individual.” Mr. Martin followed, and commenced his intended speech by saying, “The gentleman who has just sat down, was certainly right in describing himself as a contemptible individual.” Dr. S. Stennett, a Baptist minister, was in the chair ; and, being appealed to, declared it to be his opinion, that Mr. Martin should make an apology before he could be permitted to proceed. This he refused, and left the room, saying contemptuously, “Repentance is hid from my eyes.”

1796.]

Mr. John Martin.

Pitt, and were gentlemen who had approved of my political sentiments on a trying occasion. I now refer to my intended speech on the Test Act, in the year 1789. Had I been permitted to deliver the substance of that speech at the Library, probably it would not have been printed; and if it had not been printed, perhaps no part of the *Regium Donum* would have been committed to my trust.

“Dr. Stennett died August 24, 1795, and by attempting to be his successor, I was surrounded with oppositions; some of which I promised to mention.

“The arguments of the gentlemen who opposed me were so specious and earnest, that I did not receive my first warrant till February, 1797.

“Before it was in my possession, I was desired to write a letter of thanks to Mr. Pitt, and to inform him in what manner I intended to dispose of the money. I did so, and had the pleasure to hear from the Archbishop of Canterbury, that Mr. Pitt spoke of this letter in terms of approbation.

“At this period, I was permitted to make choice of Mr. Urwick of Clapham, and Mr. Barber of London, to act with me in the distribution of this money, if they were so disposed. When, therefore, I had received at the Exchequer for the nominal sum of eight hundred and fifty pounds, the net sum of seven hundred and eighty-four pounds fourteen shillings, I waited on those gentlemen, and, in a respectful manner, offered each of them two hundred pounds of that sum. Two hundred pounds of it I kept for my own distribution, and proposed to deposit the remaining fraction of one hundred and eighty-four pounds fourteen shillings at Child’s and Co. Temple Bar, to be applied to extraordinary cases, just as they might occur, either among the Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists.

“This equitable offer met with Mr. Urwick’s approbation. He ingenuously confessed, that Presbyterian ministers were now fewer in number, and better provided for, than many ministers of my own denomination; but after consulting with the former trustees, he and Mr. Barber informed me, they could not with propriety accede to my proposal. Their letter was dated February 21, 1797.

Mr. John Martin.

[1798.]

“In February, 1798, a paper, with this title, was sent to Lambeth: ‘General Remarks relative to the Royal Bounty, granted to the Protestant Dissenting Clergy.’ In that paper, if it yet exists, are these words: ‘If Mr. Martin be continued, the former trustees, how much soever they may wish to relieve the cases that lie before them, must decline acting with him, and acquiesce in surrendering a trust which they and their predecessors have held, under the favour of His present Majesty, and that of his Royal Grandfather, with very little interruption, for more than seventy years.’

“As these worthy trustees could not approve of His Majesty’s interference with their imaginary rights, it is no wonder they could not bear the least interposition from one of his ministers. This is evident, for they say, that ‘about the year 1766, a trustee was named by Lord North; but when he was told that the interference was unusual, he gave up the gentleman, and apologized to the trustees for interfering.’ Perhaps His Majesty had not heard of his lordship’s condescension.

“In the same paper we are told, that ‘the Baptists were accustomed to have but two shares, the Independents three shares, and the Presbyterians four shares. In other words, the trust will consist, when complete, of four Presbyterians, three Independents, and two Baptists.’

“Here you find a considerable alteration from the year 1762: then there were thirteen trustees, now but nine; then there were six ministers and seven gentlemen, now it seems that nine ministers will complete the trust. What the Archbishop thought of the whole of this business, and of those who engaged in it, I could tell you; but it is sufficient to say, he was not deceived.

“The trustees were now to acquiesce in surrendering their trust; but this was not an easy task, and their acquiescence, if it ever existed, was of short duration.

“In March, 1799, a new mode of opposition was adopted. The Archbishop was then informed, I had given too large a share of His Majesty’s bounty to the Baptists. On my firm and unequivocal reply to this illiberal report, his Grace told me, my answer ‘was perfectly satisfactory, as it repelled, with great propriety, an unjust charge.’

1806.]

Mr. John Martin.

“ Still dissatisfied, in January, 1803, my opponents sent a memorial to the Treasury, in which they must have been conscious they had written what they could not prove; yet the memorial thus concludes: ‘ We pray that your Lordships will take these premises into your consideration, and that His Majesty will condescend to repose the same confidence in us, which we and our predecessors have long experienced.’

“ It is generally believed, that two of the ministers who signed this memorial had never been considered as trustees, and that the predecessor of one of them had not been publicly so employed. What then could induce these two ministers to sign this strange memorial? Who they were, most of you will easily understand.

“ It was on this occasion that I paid my last visit at Lambeth, where I was always received by the Archbishop with that kind of urbanity which I shall long remember; and am thankful, that in our last interview, it was neither diminished nor concealed.

“ In April, 1803, two of the former trustees adopted a milder mode of proceeding. They sent me word by a respectable friend, they were now willing to act with me, provided I would give each of them a third part of His Majesty’s bounty to distribute among the Independents and Presbyterians. The friend who brought me these unexpected tidings, assured me that these two ministers wished to know when I could conveniently meet them in the city; adding, he had no doubt of my being cordially and politely received.

“ As this arrangement coincided with my original intention, I told my friend, that if they were appointed to act with me by government, and did not claim their thirds as hereditary trustees, I would comply with their request.

“ How this answer was delivered or received, I know not; but have reason to believe that former oppositions were renewed, and continued to August, 1806. I was then informed by proper authority, that Dr. Abraham Rees was appointed to be my successor.”

Mr. Martin was laid aside from his pulpit work, April 17, 1814, by a stroke of palsy, from which he never recovered. It was deeply affecting to see a man of his strong mental powers reduced

Mr. John Martin.

[1820.]

to a state of mere infancy. He could understand nothing said to him, unless it referred to some striking passage of scripture, and then it appeared evident he was leaning steadily on those glorious doctrines of sovereign grace and mercy to the unworthy believing in Jesus, which he had always delighted to publish in his edifying ministry.

Mr. Martin was removed by death in the year 1820. His funeral sermon was preached and published by his successor, the Rev. George Pritchard, entitled, "The Power of God Exemplified in the Employment of Human Agency."

Notwithstanding the eccentricity of Mr. Martin, (which in regard to the principles of dissent, and of politics, was very great,) he possessed real piety, and sterling integrity; and trained up some of the most excellent persons belonging to the denomination under his ministry. He was suspected of being proud, and he was certainly very unbending; but all who knew him intimately, feel great respect for his memory.*

* Mr. Martin published a number of works: viz. *The Christian's peculiar Conflict*, 1775. *Familiar Dialogues, between Amicus and Britannicus*, 1776. *On the End and Evidence of Adoption*, 1776. *The Conquest of Canaan*, 1777. *The Counsel of Christ to Christians*, 1779. *Thoughts on Public and Domestic Devotion*, 1779. *Christian Benevolence*; preached at Salter's Hall, before the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 1781. *Queries and Remarks on Human Liberty*, 1783. *Letters on Baptism*, addressed to the Rev. J. Horsey, of Northampton, in reply to a Sermon entitled "A Defence of Infant Baptism," 1786. *Imposture Detected, &c.* 1787. *A Reply to Mr. Fuller's Treatise*, entitled "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation," 1791. *A Translation of Marolle's Essay on Providence*, 1790. *Christian Prudence, a Sermon*, 1791. *A Letter, signed Eubulus, to a Young Gentleman in Prison*, 1791. *A Review of some things pertaining to Civil Government*, 1791. *A Pamphlet in 1793, occasioned by the Murder of the King of France. Seventeen Sermons on the Character of Christ*, 1793. *The Case of the Rev. John Sandys, in Four Letters, to Henry Keene, Esq.* 1793. *Some Account of the Life and Writings of the Rev. John Martin*, 1797. From this last pamphlet most of the above particulars have been extracted. Since Mr. Martin's death, two octavo volumes of posthumous sermons, have been published, and are very faithful delineations of his manner and style of preaching.

1758.]

Church in Little Wild Street.

CHURCH IN LITTLE WILD STREET.

THE history of this church, in the last volume, concludes with the letter of invitation, in the year 1758, sent by them to Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Samuel Stennett to become their pastor. He had been called to the ministry by the church in Wild Street, July 30, 1757, and on July 24, 1758, he was invited to become the assistant of his honoured father, which station he filled about ten years. At the end of this period, when he was about thirty-one years of age, they invited him, without any one opposing, to succeed to the office of pastor. His letter in reply, dated May 5, 1758, breathes the most filial regard to his late excellent father's memory, and the most pious ardour for the spiritual welfare of the church. One extract from it will be given; the whole may be read in the memoir prefixed to his works. He says, "Among the many other aggravations of my affliction, the destitute circumstances which this providence has left you in, has been no inconsiderable one; for whilst it has given you an opportunity of expressing that affection for me, which I shall always with gratitude acknowledge, it has occasioned me such concern and distress of mind, as I cannot easily describe. The pastoral office I have long trembled at the very thought of, conscious of my own inequality to it, and sensible, from the little observation I have made, of the difficulties which must need attend it; and though I could not but wish my poor services among you might prove acceptable and useful, yet I well hoped to have been excused, at least for some years, from that necessity, which Providence and your earnest and unanimous solicitations have now laid me under. Duty to God, therefore, and affection to you, have obliged me to take into the most serious consideration the call you have given me; and with earnest cries, and I hope a heart in some degree subjected to his will, I have sought God in this important affair: while I have with pleasure been assured that you have done so likewise. And, upon the whole, apprehending it to be my duty, I do now, though with a trembling heart, remembering the greatness of the service, and the eminent character whom I succeed, accept your invitation; at the same

Samuel Stennett, D. D.

[1758.]

time humbly relying on the power and grace of God for that assistance whereby I may be enabled to discharge this important trust with faithfulness and success." Thus humbly accepting the office, he filled it with great honour and usefulness for thirty-seven years.

Dr. Samuel Stennett was a native of Exeter, where his father, Dr. Joseph Stennett, the pastor of a Baptist church in that city, resided several years. Endowed by nature with every gift requisite to form the scholar and the gentleman, he applied himself closely, in his early years, to the study of science and the belles lettres.

Being designed by his father for the work of the ministry, his preparatory studies were pursued under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Hubbard, an eminent theological tutor residing at Stepney; and Dr. John Walker, the celebrated linguist of the academy at Mile-end, which was afterwards removed to Homerton. It is natural to conclude, that with these advantages, his attainments in learning must have been very considerable: indeed his proficiency in Greek, in Latin, in the oriental tongues, and his extensive acquaintance with sacred literature, are so abundantly displayed in his valuable works, that they cannot fail to establish his reputation for learning and genius. To his eminent qualifications as a scholar, he united in a conspicuous degree the exterior accomplishments of a gentleman. The urbanity of his manners, the natural suavity of his disposition, the perpetual cheerfulness and entertainment of his conversation, added to the unvarying prudence of his deportment, caused him to be admired and beloved by all who knew him. It is not surprising, that possessing these accomplishments, he should have early enjoyed an extensive circle of acquaintance. They procured him, in fact, the distinguished notice and regard of many persons in high and honourable stations of life; and if ambition had been his idol, he doubtless might have been one of her successful votaries. In no other way, however, did he avail himself of this circumstance, than as it increased his sphere of usefulness in promoting the glory of God; for, notwithstanding he might readily have obtained preferment in the National Establishment, he chose rather to maintain a good conscience in the sight of God; for

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Samuel Stennett, D.D.

he was a Dissenter from *principle*. It is true, he had the degree of Doctor in Divinity conferred upon him, in the year 1763, by the King's College and University of Aberdeen. This honour, however, was never solicited on his part, nor was it accompanied by any emolument. Having devoted his life to the service of God, he sought not the honour which cometh from men, nor did the possession of it tend in any degree to lessen his exemplary humility.

We are not in possession of the circumstances attending his conversion, but it is apparent that he was called by the grace of God to a saving knowledge of the truth in early life : and it is probable that the following hymn, which he composed, contains some allusions to this event :—

PRAISE FOR CONVERSION.

Psalm lxvi. 16.

Come ye that fear the Lord,
And listen, while I tell
How narrowly my feet escaped
The snares of death and hell.

The flatt'ring joys of sense
Assail'd my foolish heart,
While Satan, with malicious skill,
Guided the poisonous dart.

I fell beneath the stroke,
But fell to rise again :
My anguish roused me into life,
And pleasure sprung from pain.

Darkness, and shame, and grief,
Oppress'd my gloomy mind :
I look'd around me for relief,
But no relief could find.

At length to God I cried ;
He heard my plaintive sigh,
He heard, and instantly he sent
Salvation from on high.

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[1758.]

My drooping head he raised,
 My bleeding wounds he heal'd,
 Pardon'd my sins, and with a smile,
 The gracious pardon seal'd.

O ! may I ne'er forget
 The mercy of my God ;
 Nor ever want a tongue to spread
 His loudest praise abroad.

When very young, he was baptized by his father, who had previously removed from Exeter to London, where he continued to exercise the pastoral office of the Baptist church in Little Wild Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields; and from that time he became a member of this church. It appears from a reference to the church-books of the society in Little Wild Street, that Dr. Joseph Stennett, the father, had two sons, viz. Joseph and Samuel, both members of the church under his pastoral care, and both of them his assistants in the work, one of them succeeding the other. Joseph Stennett, the elder brother, received a call from the church to assist his venerable father, on the 2d of April, 1740, which he accepted, and continued to labour in that station for about two years and a half, when he was invited by the Baptist church of Coate, in Oxfordshire, to accept the pastoral office among them, which he complied with, September 1, 1743.

It seems to have been about four years after this, that Samuel succeeded to the station which the removal of his brother had left vacant, as appears from the following item in the church registry :—

“At a church-meeting held at Little Wild Street, July 30, 1747 :—

“The church having had several trials of the gifts of brother Samuel Stennett, and having heard him preach this evening, it is agreed that he be called out into the public service of the ministry.” And on the 24th of July, 1748, it is farther recorded, that “the church having had opportunity for some time past to partake of the gifts bestowed on brother Samuel Stennett, it was thought advisable to call him to their service, as an assistant to the pastor—which proposition was put to the vote and carried *nem. con.*”

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In the year 1758, being then thirty-one years of age, he was ordained to the pastoral office of that church, as successor to his father, having previously officiated about ten years in the capacity of his assistant.

His ordination took place on the 1st of June, when Dr. Gill, and Mr. Benjamin Wallin, preached on the occasion—one addressing the minister, the other the people; three persons were at the same time invested with the office of deacon. Of this church he was an ornament for more than fifty years, during forty-seven of which he exercised the ministerial functions among the people committed to his charge.

For the successful discharge of the duties of the pastoral office, he was eminently qualified. Such was the affability of his disposition, that he was ever ready, when occasion required, to accommodate himself to the meanest understanding; and his unwearied zeal prompted him to neglect no opportunity of administering assistance and consolation to the poor, to the sick, and to the dying. He generously relieved their temporal wants, and implored, with fervent supplications, the Father of mercies in their behalf. As a minister of the gospel, his labours were highly beneficial to the church. He boldly maintained in his discourses the peculiar doctrines of christianity, which were the life of his own soul—exhorting, comforting, warning, directing his flock—fervent and humble in his supplications to the throne of grace—administering the ordinances with striking solemnity—expounding the word of God in a pleasing and familiar manner, in the private meetings of the church—and maintaining order and unanimity in all their assemblies for deliberations. Upon all occasions when his advice or assistance were sought, he was frank, open, and accessible. He sought to restore the backslider, establish the unsettled, and reclaim the wandering of his flock. He kept back nothing from them in the way of doctrine, that was profitable: but shewed them, and taught them, publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the early part of his ministry, he was the means of introducing into public life some eminent individuals whom he educated in his own house; and whose talents and learning

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redounded greatly to his credit, and that of the cause they espoused. The diversity of his other engagements, subsequently prevented him from continuing this occupation. He never ceased, however, to take the most lively concern in the interests of the Baptist denomination to which he belonged, and which can boast few brighter ornaments. His brethren regarded him as a person every way well qualified to heal any difference that might unhappily arise amongst them ; for, to an amiable disposition, he united a sound understanding, remarkable for its correctness of judgment. It was his study and delight to promote peace and brotherly love in the churches, and God made him eminently instrumental, in many instances, in bringing about so desirable an end. If the churches were at rest and edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied, no man felt greater pleasure than he did, or manifested more heartfelt sorrow at the contrary appearances.

But he did not confine his good offices and exertions solely to benefit the particular denomination to which he belonged. On the contrary, he laboured assiduously to promote the interests of dissenters of all classes, and availed himself of the advantages he enjoyed through an intercourse with the higher circles of life, to obtain objects of considerable importance towards the extension of religious liberty. He wisely concluded, that whilst oppressive statutes were suffered to remain as part of the law of the land, there could be no security against their proving at some future time a handle for persecution. His judicious publications upon these subjects, cannot fail to keep alive a grateful recollection of his talents, and to endear his name to posterity.

In his private life, he was a lively instance of the amiable and blessed fruits of genuine and experimental religion. He set the Lord always before him—had habitual recourse to prayer—and walked with God—was ever ready to forgive injuries, and disposed to put the best construction upon the actions of other people. He had an utter dislike to hear any one evil spoken of, and upon such occasions occurring, he would remark, “ See, now, if you cannot tell something good of that person.”

As a husband, a father, and the master of a family, his

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deportment was alike upright and exemplary. It was his felicity to be united in early life to an excellent woman, with whom he lived in close and uninterrupted affection. Mrs. Stennett was a lady of unaffected piety and good nature, and they walked together as heirs of the grace of life for upwards of forty years. The acknowledgment of God in their family met with an ample reward. That tender love, and christian solicitude, which they uniformly displayed for their children, of whom they had two, a son and daughter, were requited with reciprocal affection; and they had the happiness of seeing them walk in the ways of God, and their son a preacher of the gospel. Their regard to the comfort, but especially to the spiritual welfare, of the domestics of their family, was productive of the happiest effect. This was strikingly exemplified in the case of a dissolute youth, whom the Doctor took into his service at the request of an aged member of his church, the boy's aunt, and whose conversion was happily brought about by an attendance on his family worship. This man afterwards became an exemplary character, and a member of the church in Little Wild Street.

The death of Mrs. Stennett, which happened on the 16th of March, 1795, was an event that shortly preceded his own removal. That patient submission to the divine will, which he had previously displayed through a variety of trying afflictions, did not forsake him on this most affecting occasion. The dissolution, however, of a long and endeared connection, was the removal of the link which attached him to this life. He frequently after that event expressed his conviction that "the time of his departure was at hand." He returned, indeed, to the duties of his ministry with redoubled diligence, as if aware that the night was fast coming when he could no longer work; and it was with difficulty he could be restrained from such over exertion as would have proved imminently detrimental to his health. His retired hours were now chiefly devoted to meditation on the Bible, and to poetry, an art for which he had throughout life evinced a great predilection.

His residence was for several years at Muswell Hill, a pleasant, rural retreat, in the neighbourhood of Highgate, about six miles from the city.

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His last two discourses were particularly striking and impressive. The first, on Christ as a High-Priest "touched with the feelings of our infirmities," was the result of his meditations during a sleepless night the week preceding its delivery; but a night so comfortable, he confessed, as he had never before enjoyed in his life. The perfect knowledge that the Lord Jesus had of his wants, the tender care he exercises, and the sufferings he so freely underwent, were the subject of his astonishment and profound admiration. No one who knew him, could suspect him to be deficient in exalted sentiments of the Redeemer; yet he declared that all he had hitherto conceived and preached concerning Jesus, appeared to him as nothing in comparison with what he then experienced. And hence he exhorted his people in the afternoon of the same day, which was the close of his ministry, "to come boldly to the throne of grace, that they might obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

His health began to decline a few months after the loss of Mrs. Stennett, and prevented the continuance of his ministerial labours. But his love to his flock suffered no abatement. He desired a friend to tell them "that he loved them all in the Lord, and that the truths he had preached, were his only consolation in the hour of death." The temper and comfort of his mind in his illness were displayed in several little incidents, which cannot be otherwise than pleasing, since they prove that he continued to experience in the midst of his afflictions "that the Lord was indeed gracious." Before he was confined to his bed, he prayed one evening in his family, in a manner which deeply impressed all present, "that God might give an easy passage out of life." And God granted him his request. Some vinegar and other ingredients being given to him as a gargle for his throat, he said, with great emotion, which shewed his thoughts were directed towards Jesus, "And in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink. Oh! when I reflect upon the sufferings of Christ, I am ready to say, what have I been thinking of all my life? They are now my only support;" and he added, respecting those tenets which he greatly abhorred, because they tended to degrade Christ's person and atonement, "what should I do now, if I had only such opinions to support me." Taking his

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daughter by the hand, he said, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him—he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." To his son who came to see him, and who at that time was also very ill, he said, "My son, God hath done great things for us. He is very gracious to us, I can leave myself and my family with him." Upon another occasion, he repeated this verse of a charming hymn which he had formerly composed :

Father at thy call I come ;
In thy bosom there is room
For a guilty soul to hide,
Press'd with grief on every side.

In short, all that he uttered indicated the serenity of his mind, that he was happy in God, and that the ground of his happiness was the love of God, his Saviour, in laying down his life for us. "Other foundation," as he expressed it with energy, "can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. His name is as ointment poured forth. Oh ! he is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." He was deprived of the power of utterance a few hours before his departure ; but he died in a tranquil and easy manner, gently falling asleep in Jesus, August 24, 1795, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

He left behind him an affectionate son and daughter, viz. the Rev. Joseph Stennett, and Miss Elizabeth Stennett, in both of whom he had "inexpressible satisfaction." His remains were deposited in his family vault in Bunhill Fields, in which Mrs. Stennett, his beloved wife, had been interred but a few months before him. The pall was supported by the following ministers ; Dr. Kippis and Dr. Rees, of the Presbyterian ; Mr. Brewer and Mr. Towle, of the Independent ; Mr. Martin and Dr. Jenkins, of the Baptist connection. The funeral sermon was preached on the 6th of September, 1795, by Dr. Jenkins (who had himself been a member of the church in Little Wild Street, and by them called to the ministry of the gospel), from 1 John iii. 16 ; and a peculiarly solemn and interesting address was delivered by Mr. Booth at the place of interment. The sermon and address were afterwards published at the request of the church, who not only

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engaged to defray the expenses of publication, but also took upon themselves to conduct the funeral, and support the whole expense attending it.

The loss of such an eminent man as Dr. Stennett, was deeply regretted, not only by the Baptist churches throughout the kingdom, but also by many most respectable persons of the other denominations of Protestant Dissenters, and also of the National Establishment. John's eulogy concerning one of the best men in apostolic times, was pronounced to be applicable to his memory in every circle of the godly, "Demetrius hath a good report of all men, and of the truth itself; yea, and we also bear record, and ye know that our record is true."

It was no trifling honour to Dr. Stennett to number among his hearers and personal friends, that friend of the miserable and wretched, John Howard, Esq. generally known as the Philanthropist. In the works of Dr. Stennett is a sermon occasioned by his death, preached March 21, 1790, founded upon Acts x. 38: "Who went about doing good."

A letter from Mr. Howard to Dr. Stennett will shew the respect which that great man bore towards him.

Smyrna, August 11, 1786.

"DEAR SIR,—

"I take the liberty to write, as I hope a few lines from your wandering friend will not be unacceptable; my plan in collecting the rules and orders, and drafts of the principal lazarettoes in Europe, with the medical treatment of patients in the plagues, being my principal object. I doubt not but you remember I mentioned, when I last had the pleasure of seeing you, that not being satisfied with the answers the physicians gave to my questions, I soon determined to visit the hospitals in Turkey, and to converse with some of those few who had the courage to visit such patients. Some months I have been in this country: I purpose myself performing quarantine off Venice. I go out with a foul bill of health, which I prefer, as I shall experience the strict quarantine of forty-two days; but I bless God my calm spirits and steady resolution have not yet forsaken me.

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“ But, Sir, the principal reason of my writing, is most sincerely to thank you for the many pleasant hours I have had in reviewing the notes I have taken of the sermons I had the happiness to hear under your ministry ; these, Sir, with many of your petitions in prayer, have been, and are, my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

“ With unabated pleasure I have attended your ministry ; no man ever entered more into my religious sentiments, or more happily expressed them. It was some little disappointment when any one occupied your pulpit. Oh, Sir ! how many Sabbaths have I ardently longed to spend in Wild Street : on those days I generally rest, or if at sea, keep retired in my little cabin. It is you that preach, and I bless God I attend with renewed pleasure. God in Christ is the rock, the portion of my soul. I have little more to add—but accept my renewed thanks. I bless God for your ministry ; I pray God reward you a thousand fold. My friend, you have an honourable work ; many seals you have to your ministry. Your very valuable life I trust will be prolonged, as with sincere affection and great esteem I shall ever remain,

Dear Sir, your obliged friend and servant,

JOHN HOWARD.”

“ P. S.—My best compliments wait upon Mrs. Stennett. I was at Constantinople a month ; a person informed me that a fortnight before my arrival, the grand vizier had examined the biscuits of the garrison, and finding them deficient in weight and quality, ordered the contractor to come before him. His excuse not being satisfactory, on his return he sent immediately and cut off his head in the street, there to remain, under the arms of the corpse, three days, having some of the biscuits placed before him, and a label upon his breast. It being very hot weather, I said it was impossible to remain three days in the street. ‘ Yea, it did,’ said he ; ‘ for our three days may be only five or six and twenty hours. If one half hour before sun-set, we call it a day ; and so, if half an hour after sun-rise we call it a day ; it is another day.’ My mind reverted to the glorious event that is our joy and rejoicing. Adieu, adieu, my dear friend,

Yours, J. H.

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“P. S.—Our ambassador shewed me in the magazine what gave me great concern: such a hasty measure will I hope be stopped; for alas! our best performances have such a mixture of folly and sin, that praise is vanity and presumption, and pain to a thinking mind.”

There are very good portraits preserved of Dr. Stennett, and also of his father and grandfather; all of them eminent ministers, and distinguished ornaments of Protestant Dissenters, and of the Baptist denomination.

Dr. Stennett was certainly possessed of fine talents and general information. His pamphlet, published in 1793, entitled “A Trip to Holyhead,” affords proof of this. The conversation related was founded in fact, between Dr. Stennett and a clergyman of the Establishment, on the following topics:—The Toleration Act, passed in 1689. The Enlargement of that Act in 1779. The American War. The question of a Reform. The late Application for a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Laws. The French Revolution.

Most of the works of Dr. Stennett have been reprinted. In 1784, three octavo volumes were published, with some account of his life and writings. This “body,” however, is destitute of one of his best pieces. In 1772, he published, in a 12mo. volume of 170 pages, a work entitled “Remarks on the Christian Minister’s Reasons for administering Baptism by Sprinkling or Pouring of Water, in a series of Letters to a Friend:” and about three years afterwards, a second volume of 300 pages, entitled “An Answer to the Christian Minister’s Reasons for Baptizing Infants, in a series of Letters, &c.” His opponent was the Rev. Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Addington. It is quite unjustifiable that this excellent defence of Dr. Stennett’s distinguishing principles, and of the sentiments of the Baptists, has been left out of what should have been a complete, and not a mutilated edition of his works. Such is the fastidious and liberal spirit of the present age, that nothing must be republished which is thought *sectarian*! as that will prevent the works from being purchased by *Catholic* christians.*

* The *uniform* edition of the works of the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, in

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The following description of these works, from the pen of a Pædobaptist, the Rev. Dr. Winter, will shew that they might have made a part of his collected works without injury even to the enterprize of the publishers. "Once he engaged in controversy," says Dr. Winter, "on the long agitated subject of baptism; and certainly shewed himself a master of the subject. Nor will the praise of perspicuity and arrangement, solidity of reasoning, zeal in supporting the firm convictions of his mind, or candour to those whose sentiments were different to his own, be denied him by any reader, whatever be his view of the institution on which he wrote."

"As a practical writer," adds Dr. Winter, "however, he was undoubtedly most eminent, and most useful. Besides many excellent sermons on particular occasions, his two volumes on 'Personal Religion;' his discourses 'On Domestic Duties;' his sermons 'On the Parable of the Sower,' and 'On the Inspiration of the Scriptures,' have not only done him great credit as an author, but what is of infinitely greater importance, have been of unspeakable service to the world, and especially to the rising generation.*

From the works of Samuel Stennett, D. D. are also excluded, "A Free and Dispassionate Account of the First Application of the Protestant Dissenters to Parliament, for Relief in the matter of Subscription," in the year 1772: and, afterwards, a Tract, upon the "Subscription to the Declaration," in the year 1779, when the application was successful.

The meeting-house was rebuilt during Dr. Stennett's ministry. It is a most substantial, elegant, circular building, capable of seating about five hundred persons. After the death of Dr. Stennett, the church found it difficult to obtain a successor; and it appeared, by the falling off of the congregation, as if the pastor had supplied the chief bond of union. It is probable that the neglect of church-meetings contributed greatly

eight volumes, which seems to have been arranged upon similar principles, omitted his pamphlet on the "Unscriptural Practice of admitting unbaptized Persons to the Lord's Table."

* Protestant Dissenters' Magazine, vol. ii. p. 367.

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toward this ; the members of the church had felt no particular interest in any thing beyond attending on public worship : there were also no benevolent societies to attach them to each other. The annual collections for the Baptist Fund were respectable, but these formed no bond of union. The circumstance, too, of the pastor residing six miles from the place of worship, must have been unfavourable to the union of the people. The rapid decline of a church where there had been such able evangelical pastors, and ministers too of such reputation, is a very instructive example. Others of our churches in the city declined from erroneous views of doctrinal truth, from the want of vigorous discipline, or of pastoral superintendence.

Dr. Stennett's successors have been the Rev. Messrs. Benjamin Coxhead, now at Winchester ; Thomas Waters, A. M. now at Worcester ; John Edwards, now at Watford ; and James Hargrave, now at Waltham Abbey. The church is at present without a pastor, and is reduced to a low condition.

The vaults under the meeting-house, which is a freehold, have lately been fitted up as a most convenient and safe cemetery.

CHURCH IN PRESCOTT STREET.

THE former part of the history of the church in Prescott Street, concluded with the death of the Rev. Samuel Burford, in 1768. In April of this year, the Rev. Abraham Booth, then a minister at Sutton Colefield, Northamptonshire, published his still celebrated work, entitled "The Reign of Grace ;" and this circumstance led to the author being invited to preach at Prescott Street, which he complied with in the June following ; and he supplied the church for three successive Lord's days. He then returned to his family. He soon after complied with a second invitation, and preached to them for four more Lord's

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days, and was so much approved of, that he received a unanimous invitation to become their pastor. By a letter, dated October 1, 1768, he accepted their call, and on February 16, 1769, he was ordained by prayer, and the imposition of hands. The confession of faith which he delivered has been since printed, and may be read in the memoir prefixed to his works.

This truly honourable minister was born at Blackwall, in Derbyshire, on the 20th of May, 1734, Old Style. Before he was a year old, his parents removed to Annesley-wood House, a hamlet in Northamptonshire, for the purpose of occupying a farm under the Duke of Portland. Abraham was the eldest of a numerous family, and when able he assisted his father in the farm, and continued thus employed till he was sixteen years old. At this period he had never spent six months at school: his father taught him to read, making it a daily practice to hear him say his lesson after dinner. He owed it almost entirely to his own industry that he acquired the art of writing, and a knowledge of arithmetic. To prosecute these studies, he cheerfully gave up his hours of recreation, and even of repose.

He was brought up in the church of England, but when about ten years of age, some General Baptist ministers visited the neighbourhood, and through the blessing of God upon their labours, his mind was awakened to a permanent concern about the salvation of his soul. When he was about the age of twenty-one, in the year 1755, he was baptized by one of these ministers, Mr. Francis Smith, of Barton, and became a member of the General Baptist Society.

When Mr. Booth left the farming business, he learned the trade of stocking weaving. At the age of twenty-four he married Miss Elizabeth Bowman, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, who proved a most excellent wife, and with whom, till within a few years of his own death, he enjoyed much domestic felicity.

To provide for an increasing family, they opened a school at Sutton Ashfield; Mrs. B. instructing the female scholars in useful branches of needle-work, and Mr. B. continuing to work at his loom, in connection with the school.

It was not long after his joining the society, that he was encouraged to preach, which he did as an itinerant, throughout the

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neighbouring districts. In 1760, the pious people at Kirkby-wood House, having been formed into a church, Mr. Booth was appointed their minister. He laboured among them about six or seven years, but never became their regular pastor; the reason of this, doubtless, was the change which about this time took place in his theological sentiments. He had hitherto held the Arminian doctrine of universal redemption, and, as a strenuous advocate for the universality of divine grace, had printed a poem in reproach of the doctrines of personal election, and particular redemption. He was at this time twenty-six years of age. When he, about seven years afterwards, published his "*Reign of Grace*," he thought it proper to make all the atonement in his power for having written in such a spirit, and for having published such errors. He thus speaks of his performance:—"As a poem, if considered in a critical light, it is despicable; if in a theological view, detestable; as it is an impotent attack on the honour of divine grace, in respect to its glorious freeness, and a bold opposition to the sovereignty of God, and as such I renounce it." At a future period of his life, he thus alludes to these circumstances:—"The doctrine of sovereign and distinguishing grace, as commonly and justly stated by Calvinists, it must be acknowledged, is too generally exploded. This the writer of these pages knows by experience, to his grief and shame. Through the ignorance of his mind, the pride of his heart, and the prejudice of his education, he in his younger years often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small weakness; but after an impartial inquiry, and many prayers, he found reason to alter his judgment: he found it to be a doctrine of the Bible, and a dictate of the unerring Spirit. Thus convinced, he received the obnoxious sentiment, under a full conviction of its being a divine truth."

Mr. Booth always acted upon the principle of integrity and uprightness, and therefore having fully made up his mind, he did not conceal his change of sentiments. This ultimately led to a separation from his people, and Mr. Booth preached his farewell sermon to the General Baptist congregation, from the parable of the unjust steward. In this he remarked, "that fraud and concealment, of various kinds, may obtain the favour of

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men;—that when favour is gained by such means, he who gains it, and they who grant it, are chargeable with injustice peculiarly censurable;—and that scripture, reason, and conscience, unite their authority in recommending universal fidelity to accountable creatures, and especially to the ministers and professors of religion, in the view of the great day of account, when they must all give up their stewardship.”

He was for a short time silent as a minister, but having procured a room at Sutton Ashfield, called Bore's Hall, it was registered as a preaching-house, and he recommenced his labours as a Calvinistic preacher of the gospel. It was during these five or six years of labour, that he composed his invaluable treatise “*The Reign of Grace*,” the substance of which he delivered in a series of discourses to his small congregation, and afterwards at Nottingham and Chesterfield, at both of which places he was in the habit of preaching on alternate sabbaths, in connection with his charge at Sutton Ashfield.

When Mr. Booth had finished his manuscript, one of his friends, who had perused it, shewed it to the Rev. Henry Venn, an evangelical clergyman, the author of “*The Complete Duty of Man*.” After perusing it, this gentleman took a journey from Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, to Sutton Ashfield, to see and converse with the author, who was working at his stocking-loom. Mr. Venn strongly urged Mr. Booth to publish this work, which he accordingly did. “When I had got it printed,” said Mr. B. to the writer, “my good friend, Mr. Venn, took as many copies as enabled me to pay the printer, leaving me the remaining copies for sale.” This was said not long before his death, and with strong feelings of gratitude towards his clerical friend. It was the circumstance of this work being published, as before observed, that introduced Mr. Booth to the knowledge of the destitute church in Prescott Street.

Thus furnished with a mature and disciplined judgment, and having given the most convincing proofs of an inflexibly honest mind, and uncompromising principles, Mr. Booth undertook, at the age of thirty-four years, the difficult and responsible station of pastor of that church, which the great Samuel Wilson had

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planted, and the good Samuel Burford had watered ; and which it had pleased God by his blessing abundantly to increase.

Up to this period Mr. Booth's acquirements were confined, or nearly so, to a knowledge of the English grammar. He felt his deficiencies in this respect, and having a strong desire for acquiring a knowledge of the languages, he resolved to improve the opportunities afforded him for obtaining an acquaintance with the Latin and Greek. He accordingly put himself under the tuition of a Roman Catholic priest, who was an eminent classical scholar. This gentleman, of whose erudition Mr. Booth always spoke in very high terms, used to breakfast with his pupil ; they retired together to his study to attend to business. With this exception, Mr. Booth might be considered as a self-taught scholar.

Having obtained a familiar acquaintance with Latin, he gained access to the writings of eminent foreign divines ; such as Witsius, Turretine, Staplerus, Vitringe, and Venema. He was also intimately acquainted with the best writers on ecclesiastical history ; viz. Dupont, Cave, Bingham, Venema, Spanheim, and the Madgeburg Centuriators. On the article of Jewish antiquities, he had read Lewis, Jennings, Reland, Spencer, Ikenius, Carpzovivus, and Fabricius of Hamburg. Among the English writers he preferred Dr. John Owen, whose evangelical and learned works he has very frequently quoted, and to whom he in various ways acknowledged his obligations.

Mr. Booth's attention to reading was subordinated to his work as a minister, and his duties as a pastor. He was generally at home and in his pulpit every Lord's day. To the writer of this, not long before his death, he remarked, " I have never left my people, since I first settled with them, more than two Lord's days at a time." He added, " Had I left them so much as some pastors have left theirs, I have no doubt my people would have left me as theirs have left them."

Notwithstanding the eminence of his learning, and the strength of his mental powers, he at one period of his ministry felt greatly embarrassed in his preaching. " I wondered much," said he, " that those persons who had heard me preach in the morning, should

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come again in the afternoon. I really thought for some time that I must have given up the ministry ; and I felt more thankful then, than for any other temporal blessing, that I had a trade to which I could return for the support of my family."

When, about the year 1792, the subject of the African Slave Trade very greatly engaged the attention of the nation, and petitions from every part of the kingdom were presented to the legislature for its abolition, Mr. Booth took a very active and lively interest in promoting a petition to express his abhorrence, and that of his congregation, of that infernal traffic. He also preached a sermon, founded on Exodus xxi. 16 : " And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." This was published at the request of the church, and extensively circulated. They also made a pecuniary collection towards the expenses which attended the application to parliament. This horrid trade was not suppressed till eight years afterwards, but there is no doubt that he essentially contributed towards it ; at least, this is the opinion of the most competent judge on the subject, the celebrated antislavery advocate, Clarkson. In his work entitled " The Abolition of the Slave Trade," &c. that inestimable philanthropist has given a list of names of the principal benefactors, who by their writings, money, and influence, assisted in this enterprise of mercy ; and among them, to his immortal honour, is found that of our never-to-be-forgotten, and still lamented, Abraham Booth.

It was the privilege of the writer to become acquainted with this excellent minister about a year and a half before he was called to his reward. He hopes never to forget his affectionate counsels, and he has a strong and lively recollection of the ardent piety he evinced, while he laboured under the violence of an asthmatic complaint. " I have never," said he, " thought so much of the words of Daniel to Belshazzar, as since I have been thus afflicted, ' The God in whose hand thy breath is ! ' " The writer observed, " What a mercy, Sir, the last part of the sentence, ' thou hast not glorified,' is not applicable to your character." He replied with great energy, " I hope it is not, in its most awful meaning ; but in a very great degree it is true of me." He added, " And yet I trust I can say, to the honour of divine

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grace which has assisted me, that since I first professed religion, I have been so much preserved from every evil way, that if the secrets of my life were written by one who was not an enemy to me, there would be nothing to tell the world of which I should be ashamed to hear." * His emphatic and devout aspirations in blessing God for the good hope through grace which he enjoyed, were most remarkable. His conversation was evidently in heaven, and his affections set supremely on things above. It was most edifying to hear his spiritual conversation and godly exhortations; he appeared

" Like a bird that's hampered,
Which struggles to get loose."

A few months before his death, Mr. Booth, on returning from a meeting of his ministering brethren in the city, was taken suddenly ill, and from that time, in September 1805, was almost wholly laid aside from public labour, which now entirely devolved upon his esteemed and respectful assistant, the Rev. William Gray. He administered the Lord's supper on the first Lord's day in January, 1806, and, notwithstanding his extreme weakness, he attended the monthly meeting for sermon and prayer, held at his place on Thursday, the 23d of January. His brethren in the ministry present, who very highly revered his character, and others of his old friends, took an affectionate and last farewell of this good minister of Jesus Christ

It was pleasing for those friends who visited him at this period,

* The following anecdote may be regarded as characteristic of Mr. Booth, which was never made public till after his death. Some years before his death, a particular friend of Mr. Booth's said to him, "So, I find, Sir, that you have lost a valuable member of your church." "Yes," he replied, "and she has left me a legacy:" at the same time adding, "There are of her own family, who stand more in need of it than I do." He then asked his friend, whether, under such circumstances, he thought it would be right in him to receive it; for that he himself thought it would not. The legacy was transferred to him, in conformity with the will of the deceased. Some time afterwards, Mr. Booth went to the Bank of England, and without saying any thing more on the subject to his friend, executed a transfer of the legacy to one nearly related to the family of the executrix, for whose benefit he relinquished it.

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to find that the doctrines of reigning grace, which he had so fully stated, and so ably defended nearly forty years before, were now the support of his mind, and the consolation of his heart. To many anxious inquiries he would say, "I have no fears about my state, I now live upon what I have been teaching to others.

" ' The gospel bears my spirit up ;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood.

On the Saturday preceding his death, January 25, 1806, he requested to see a much esteemed friend, that he might communicate to him his last instructions, and to whom, among other things, he said, "I am peaceful, but not elevated." On the next day, the son of his friend called at the house of Mr. Booth, and inquired after his health. After replying to his inquiry, he added, "Young man, think of your soul; if you lose that, you lose your all. Your father is my especial friend. Be not half a christian. Some people have religion enough to make them miserable, but not enough to make them happy. The ways of religion are good ways; I have found them thus sixty years." This was on the Lord's day, during which he for some time was enabled to sit up in his study. Many of his friends, supposing his dissolution was at hand, called to see him, as they rightly conjectured, for the last time. Though scarcely able to converse, he spoke a few words to them, especially to some of his young friends, who were anxious to take their leave of him. To one of these he said, "But a little while, and I shall be with your dear father and mother." To another, "I have borne you on my heart before the Lord, you now need to pray for yourself." To a third, in reference to a Socinian minister, he said with deep solemnity, "Beware of ——'s sentiments." It should seem, that on this day he had no expectation that he should so soon die. Mr. Guttridge, a deacon of the church, when he parted with him in the afternoon, said, "The Lord be with you, and if I do not see you again, I trust we shall meet in the better world." Mr. Booth replied, "I expect to see you again in this." He went to bed about nine o'clock. On the next morning he was speechless,

Mr. Abraham Booth.

[1806.]

though apparently in possession of his reason. About nine in the evening, his son-in-law, Mr. Granger, and his assistant, Mr. Gray, who were in the room, remarking they did not hear him breathe, drew near to the bed-side just in time to see him lie back on the pillow, when he almost instantly expired without a sigh or groan.

The leading traits of his character may be judged of from the following extracts from his last will and testament, written not long before his death :—" I, Abraham Booth, Protestant Dissenting Minister, in the parish of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, reflecting on the uncertainty of life, do make this my last Will and Testament, in manner following :

" Being firmly persuaded that the doctrines which have constituted my public ministry for a long course of years, are divine truths ; being deeply sensible that all I have, and all I am, are the Lord's, and entirely at his disposal ; and being completely satisfied that his dominion is perfectly wise and righteous ; I, in the anticipation of my departing moment, cheerfully commend my departing spirit into his hands, in expectation of everlasting life, as the gift of sovereign grace, through the mediation of Jesus Christ ; and my body I resign to the care of Providence in the silent grave, with the pleasing hope of its being raised again at the last day, in a state of perpetual vigour, beauty, and glory."

He directed in his will that not more than twenty pounds should be expended on his funeral, which was carefully attended to.

The estimation in which Mr. Booth was held by the church, appears by an extract from a narrative entered in their records :

" He possessed a noble disinterestedness of spirit ; he sought not ours but us ; he was truly the servant of this church, for Jesus' sake. A pastor, in the language of Jeremiah, according to God's heart ; who fed his people with knowledge and understanding. There are, perhaps, but few instances in the church of Christ, of one who has better exemplified the character of a christian bishop, as drawn by the apostle Paul, Tit. i. 7—9.

Mr. Booth was interred in the burying-ground behind Maze-

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Mr. Abraham Booth.

Pond meeting-house, where a plain head-stone stands, to perpetuate the place which received, and, it is hoped, retains his mortal remains.*

In the meeting-house where he had so long and so ably maintained the doctrines of grace, and the scriptural discipline of the church, a neat marble tablet is placed over the vestry door, with the following honourable inscription :—

THIS TABLET

was erected by the Church in grateful Remembrance
of their beloved and venerable Pastor

ABRAHAM BOOTH :

who, with unremitted Fidelity, discharged his ministerial Labours
in this place, thirty-seven Years.

As a Man, and as a Christian, he was highly and deservedly esteemed :

As a Minister he was solemn and devout :

His addresses were perspicuous, energetic, and impressive :

they were directed to the Understanding, the Conscience, and the Heart.

Profound Knowledge, sound Wisdom, and unaffected Piety,
were strikingly exemplified

in the Conduct of this excellent Man.

In him, the poor have lost a generous and humane Benefactor ;

the Afflicted and the Distressed, a sympathetic and wise Counsellor ;
and this Church,

a disinterested, affectionate, and faithful Pastor :

nor will his name, or writings, be forgotten,

while Evangelical Truth shall be revered, Genius admired,
or Integrity respected.

He departed this Life on the 27th January, 1806,

In the 73d year of his Age.

The following accurate description of Mr. Booth's character, was written and published soon after his death, by his friend, the Rev. Dr. Newman. All who knew the original will pronounce it a most finished full-length portrait.

* This refers to a report that was widely circulated, that his body had been stolen: which the vicinity of the burying-ground, close to the hospital, was likely to confirm. The grave was opened, and it was said the coffin had not been violated.

Mr. Abraham Booth.

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“As a christian, he was pre-eminent, fearing the Lord above many. Called by divine grace when about twelve years of age, he experienced, no doubt, in the long course of threescore years, many changes of trials and temptations, many alternations of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow. Yet, with respect to his personal interest in the divine favour, he seems to have been carried on in an even tenor, without many remarkable elevations or depressions. His common conversation breathed much of a devotional spirit, and discovered the strong sense he had of his own sinfulness before God, and the simplicity of his dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit. Firm in his attachment to his religious principles, he despised the popular cant about charity, and cultivated genuine candour; which is alike remote from the laxity of latitudinarians, and the censoriousness of bigots. He was conspicuous for self-denial, and contempt of the world; walking humbly with God. His moral character was pure and unblemished. Perhaps there never was a man of more stern, unbending integrity: he would have been admired and revered by Aristides the Just. Sincerity clear as crystal, consistency with himself, and unbroken uniformity of conduct, were always to be seen by the ten thousand eyes that were continually fixed upon him. He was temperate, even to abstemiousness: in fortitude ‘bold as a lion.’ Caution was interwoven with the texture of his mind; yet he would sometimes say, ‘We have need of caution against caution itself, lest we be over-cautious.’ He once observed, that ‘in morals, integrity holds the first place, benevolence the second, and prudence the third. Where the first is not, the second cannot be; and where the third is not, the other two will often be brought into suspicion.’ In his attendance on public worship, he was remarkable for an exemplary punctuality. In the weekly meeting of ministers, and the monthly meeting of ministers and churches, if he were not with them precisely at the appointed hour (which very rarely happened), they did not expect him at all. His manners were simple, grave, and unaffected; frequently enlivened with an agreeable pleasantry. It was edifying and delightful to observe how he perpetually breathed after more conformity to Christ—more heavenly-mindedness. That man must either have been extremely wise

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Mr. Abraham Booth.

or extremely foolish, who could spend an hour in his company without being made wiser and better.

“As a divine, he was a star of the first magnitude. A Protestant, and a Protestant Dissenter, on principle, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist denomination, to which he belonged. A Calvinist, and in some particulars approaching what is called High-Calvinism; but he has sometimes declared, as many other great men have done, that he never saw any human system, which he could fully and entirely adopt. From the pulpit, his sermons were plain and textual, not systematic; highly instructive, always savoury and acceptable to persons of evangelical taste; for, the glory, the government, and the grace of Christ, were his favourite themes. He aimed to counteract, with equal care, self-righteous legality on the one hand, and on the other, Antinomian licentiousness. Such was the excellence of his personal character, that he needed not the arts of the orator, and the graces of elocution, to gain attention. His audience listened with profound veneration, and hung upon his lips. He had the gift of prayer in a very high degree, and whoever heard him was powerfully impressed with the idea that he was a man who prayed much in secret. From the press, he appeared to the greatest advantage. Nor will it be denied by any, that his writings are very elaborate and exquisitely polished. No bagatelles, no airy speculations—all solid and useful. His ‘Reign of Grace,’ and, indeed, all his works, will continue to instruct and delight the christian world till the end of time.

“As a christian pastor, he shone with distinguished lustre. Every member of the church in which he presided, had a share in his affection. The poor were as welcome to his advice and assistance as the rich: and his faithful reproofs were given without partiality to either, as occasion required. It was justly remarked at his grave, that he has unintentionally drawn his own picture, in his sermon, entitled, ‘Pastoral Cautions.’ He was not a lord over God’s heritage. It has been said, he appeared always willing to give up almost every thing to the decision of the church; and the consequence was, the church gave up almost every thing to his decision. His attention to the poor and the afflicted of his congregation, was highly exemplary.

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Nor did he content himself with saying, ‘Be ye warmed, and be ye filled,’ but liberally contributed to the supply of their wants, according to his ability. The economical system he established at home, furnished him with a considerable fund for charitable uses abroad. His charity was never ostentatious—none but the omniscient eye knew the extent of it, and therefore it is impossible to say how many of the sons and daughters of affliction have lost, by his death, a most generous benefactor.

“As a literary man, he was generally acknowledged to belong to the first class among Protestant Dissenters. Without the advantages of a liberal education, he had cut his own way, by the force of a strong, keen mind, through rocks and deserts. His memory was amazingly tenacious; his reasoning powers acute; his apprehension quick; his deliberation cool and patient; his determination slow and decided. His application must have been very intense; to which his vigorous and robust constitution of body was happily subservient. Though he perused a prodigious multitude of books, and respected the opinions of wise and learned men, he ever maintained a sublime independence of mind, and thought for himself. His knowledge of languages was very considerable. Not many of the *literati* of this country have had so intimate an acquaintance with the grace and force of words, or have written with such correctness and energy united. Yet he has been heard to say, that he had a wife and family before he knew any thing of the theory of English grammar. He was not unacquainted with the Greek and Roman classics; they were, however, by no means his favourite authors. It would surprise the public to know what loads of ponderous Latin quartos he read, of French, Dutch, and German divines! The Greek Testament he went through nearly fifty times, by the simple expedient of reading one chapter every morning, the first thing, not so much for the purpose of criticism as of devotion. General science and literature claimed a share of his attention, and every one was astonished to observe the fund of information he possessed on all subjects: In history, civil and ecclesiastical—in antiquities, Jewish and Christian—in theological controversy, and the creeds of all denominations, he was equalled by few, and excelled by none. It is pleasing to recollect, that all his learning

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was solemnly consecrated to the cross of Christ ; and that, while he was disgusted, as he often was, with the illiteracy and ignorance of books which he perceived even among educated preachers in many instances, he was very far from supposing human literature to be essential to the gospel ministry.

“ As a universal friend and counsellor, he was exceedingly beloved. His extensive and diversified knowledge, his well-tryed integrity, his penetration, prudence, and benevolence, occasioned numberless applications for his counsel, not merely from the Baptists, but from Christians of almost all parties. Difficult texts of scripture, knotty points of controversy, disputes in churches, and private cases of conscience, were laid before him in abundance. Seldom was there an appeal made to the judgment of any other man. It was like ‘taking counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter.’ Yet he was no dictator. When he had patiently heard the case, and candidly given his opinion, he would usually say, ‘Consult other friends, and then judge for yourself.’ Such a degree of majesty attended him, plain as he was in exterior, that if he sat down with you but a few minutes, you could not help feeling that you had a prince or a great man in the house. It would sometimes appear to strangers that he was deficient in that winning grace which accompanies softness and sweetness of manner ; but those who were most intimately acquainted with him, are fully prepared to say, there was in general, the greatest delicacy of genuine politeness in his conduct. Many young ministers will long deplore their loss. Never surely can they forget how readily he granted them access to him at all times—how kindly he counselled them in their difficulties—how faithfully he warned them of their dangers ! With a mournful pleasure they must often recollect his gentleness in correcting their mistakes—his tenderness in imploring the divine benediction upon them—his cordial congratulations when he witnessed their prosperity ! ”

Mr. Booth left five children, two sons and three daughters ; and some small property to each of them.*

* His style of living was most economical. The writer reflects with pleasure having once dined with him in his kitchen on a plain meal. This

Mr. Abraham Booth.

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In addition to "The Reign of Grace," Mr. Booth published, after he came to London, the following works. In 1770, *The Death of Legal Hope*, the *Life of Evangelical Obedience*; or, an *Essay upon Gal. ii. 19*. In 1777, he reprinted a work, which had been translated from the French by Dr. James Abbadie, Dean of Killaloe, in Ireland, entitled, *The Deity of Christ essential to the Christian Religion*. In 1778, he published his work entitled, *An Apology for the Baptists*; in which they are vindicated from the imputation of laying an unwarrantable stress on the Ordinance of Baptism. In 1784, he published his *Pædobaptism Examined*, on the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings of the most learned Pædobaptists. In the year 1787, a second and enlarged edition of this work was printed; and in 1792, *A Defence of "Pædobaptism Examined;"* or, *Animadversions on Dr. Edward Williams's Antipædobaptism Examined*. In 1788, he published his *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*. In 1786, he published a work, entitled, *Glad Tidings to perishing Sinners*; or, *The Genuine Gospel a complete Warrant for the Ungodly to believe in Jesus Christ*. A second edition, much improved, was published in 1790. In this year he published a most valuable sermon, which he had preached at the Baptist monthly meeting, entitled, *The Amen to Social Prayer*, from the word Amen. In 1803, he published another monthly meeting sermon, entitled, *Divine Justice essential to the Divine Character*. In 1805, the last year of his life, he published a work entitled *Pastoral Cautions*; the substance of which, twenty years before, he delivered as a charge to Mr. Thomas Hopkins, when he was ordained as pastor over the church in Eagle Street.

mode of house-keeping enabled him to be "given to hospitality," and also to save some money. "I have," said he, when counselling the writer to be careful how he invited persons to dine and to take tea, "got some money by publishing my writings; but nothing depend on it for what I have published for the use of the Baptists. I have had some few legacies, but none amounting to more than one hundred pounds. I have put my children to boarding school; and had, at times, a dozen of wine in my house; but never have I been able to do either at my own expense out of my income as a minister." He added, "If you do not take care, my friend, you will spend twenty pounds a year at your tea-table."

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Several of his addresses at the funerals, and some funeral sermons, were also published. After his death two essays, which he had employed his last days in revising, were published, entitled, *An Essay on the Love of God to his Chosen People*; and *On a Conduct and Character formed under the Influence of Evangelical Truth*. Some other of his manuscripts were not published.

It is no part of the writer's design to attempt a description of these excellent publications. It will be seen from their titles how deeply impressed was their author's mind with the most exalted views of the riches of divine grace in man's salvation; and of the constraining influence of grace, to produce the most exact regard to the divine law of God, in universal holiness of life. Mr. Booth was certainly one of the most eminent ministers who has belonged to the Particular Baptist denomination. To his exalted usefulness, in the formation of holy and benevolent purposes in the minds of his people, the Baptist Fund owes its chief endowments; and the Academical Institution, at Stepney, its entire foundation. The Baptist Fund send his publications, "*On the Kingdom of Christ*," and "*Pastoral Cautions*," in every grant of books made to young ministers. If they would resolve to do this also in regard to his "*Pædobaptism Examined*," &c. it might lead to its republication. It is not to the credit of the denomination, that a work of so much labour and research should be out of print.* It will be an evidence of great laxity, and want of evangelical zeal, when the Baptists overlook and forget the excellence of the works and character of—Abraham Booth.

It was not long that the church was destitute. They unanimously chose Mr. William Stevens to succeed Mr. Booth in his office. In a few years afterwards, Mr. Stevens resigned his station, and removed to Manchester, and shortly after to Rochdale, where he is an acceptable and useful pastor.

He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Griffin, who is at present the pastor. The church is still flourishing.

* Since this was written, that work has been reprinted; the Baptist Fund having taken one hundred copies of the new edition, for the use of young ministers.

CHURCH IN CARTER LANE.

IT is a most remarkable circumstance, that there have been but two pastors of this church in the course of one hundred and ten years. The learned Dr. John Gill was ordained in 1719, and died in 1771. The present revered pastor, the Rev. Dr. John Rippon, succeeded soon after, and is still able to perform the duties of his office with acceptance and usefulness.

The attempt which was made in the year 1812, to bring about a general union of the Baptist ministers and churches, has been already related. The next year this important measure was carried into effect. The following are the principles agreed to at the meeting held at the vestry of Carter Lane meeting-house, on Tuesday morning, before breakfast, the 24th of June, 1813. Dr. Rippon in the chair:—

1. “That this society of ministers and churches be designated ‘The General Union of Baptist ministers and churches,’ maintaining the important doctrines of ‘three equal persons in the Godhead; eternal and personal election; original sin; particular redemption; free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; efficacious grace in regeneration; the final perseverance of real believers; the resurrection of the dead; the future judgment; the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the eternal misery of such as die in impenitence—with the congregational order of the churches inviolably.’

2. “That ministers and churches, who may hereafter be desirous of uniting with this society, be admitted, with the consent of a majority of the whole body, at the annual meeting.

3. “That the formation of this Union be for the purpose of affording to the ministers and churches of the denominations the means of becoming better acquainted with each other, with a view to excite brotherly love, and to furnish a stimulus for a zealous co-operation in promoting the cause of Christ in general, and particularly in our own denomination, and especially to encourage and support our mission.

1813.] *General Union of the Baptist Ministers and Churches.*

4. "That an annual meeting of the society be held in London, or elsewhere, on the Wednesday nearest Midsummer-day, in every year; at which time two sermons shall be preached, and collections made in aid of the Baptist mission.

5. "That the members of the general Union meet on the following morning, at six o'clock, to hear the report of the committee, transact the business of the society, and to choose a treasurer, committee, and secretaries for the ensuing year.

6. "That for the present year Mr. Burls be the treasurer; that the associated ministers in London, who are members of the general Union, with one or two members from each of their churches who join the Union, be the committee;—and that Mr. William Button, Mr. Joseph Ivimey, and Mr. Thomas Thomas, be the secretaries; and that their meetings be open to all the ministers and messengers from the country belonging to the Union.

7. "That it be recommended to the churches to establish auxiliary societies in aid of the mission, and that our 'Academical Institutions,' the 'Particular Baptist Fund,' the 'Widow's Fund,' and the 'Baptist Society in London for the encouragement and support of itinerant and village preaching,' are justly entitled to the approbation and support of the denomination, and that the churches be requested to obtain subscriptions and make collections in aid of these several objects.

8. "That auditors of the treasurer's account be annually appointed by the committee; a correct statement of which, together with the report of the committee, and the minutes of business at the annual meeting, shall be printed, as soon as conveniently may be, after the annual meeting, and circulated among all the churches belonging to the Union.

9. "That the Baptist Magazine, furnishing a most desirable medium of communication, respecting the state of our churches at home, and providing a most seasonable aid to necessitous widows of deceased ministers, to which purpose the whole profits are applied, is highly deserving the encouragement of the denomination; and that it be recommended to all our ministers and churches, to promote the circulation of it, to the utmost of their power.

Mr. Joseph Fox.

[1816.]

10. "That this society disclaim all manner of superiority and superintendence over the churches; or any authority or power, to impose any thing on their faith or practice; their sole intention is to be helpers together, one of another, in promoting the common cause of christianity, and the interests of the several churches of the denomination to which they belong.

11. "That the monthly prayer-meeting for the spread of the gospel that has been for many years observed in most of the churches, be recommended to be generally regarded on the first Monday evening in every month.*

It is affecting to have to observe, that this good design was never fully realized. The society soon ceased; but an annual meeting has been held at the vestry of Carter Lane meeting ever since.

A member of this church, Joseph Fox, Esq. was the distinguished supporter of Joseph Lancaster. The following account of him was written by an intimate friend, and published in the Baptist Magazine for the year 1816:—

"On the 11th day of April, 1816, departed this life, at his house, Argyll Street, London, Joseph Fox, Esq. surgeon and dentist, after a severe illness, of several days' duration. Few men have ever closed a career of more private and public usefulness,

* The monthly prayer-meeting for the spread of the gospel was first established by several ministers in Scotland in 1744. After two years they transmitted the plan to America, and procured the concurrence of many ministers and churches there in the same object. In 1784, the Baptist churches in England of the Nottinghamshire Association, adopted a resolution to establish "a meeting for the general revival and spread of religion; to be observed the first Monday evening in every calendar month by all their churches." To promote this object, Mr. Sutcliff reprinted a pamphlet of the excellent Jonathan Edwards, of New England, entitled, "An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer." This had a very great effect, and monthly prayer-meetings became very general among the churches where it circulated. These prayer-meetings were soon followed by the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society; and by this and other fruits, they led the way to those surprising events which have since taken place in the heathen world.

1816.]

Mr. Joseph Fox.

than hath this excellent individual. In private life, he exercised, in an eminent degree, all those tender and social charities, which peculiarly endear a man to that little circle, in which their operation can alone be fully felt; and which they alone can render happy. The tears of those, whose privilege it was to be numbered in that circle, bear a silent, but impressive, testimony to his private worth, in the interesting and endearing relations of husband, father, brother, and friend. In his religious profession he was a Baptist; and was distinguished at once by the decision and constancy of his own opinions, and by the exercise of christian love and charity towards those who conscientiously differed from himself. With unshaken firmness, he held and maintained the great and essential truths of the gospel, depending, for final acceptance, after a life adorned by every virtue, and devoted to every duty, on the merits of his Saviour and his God. In his profession, he had long been eminent, and, for several years, delivered lectures on its various branches, at Guy's Hospital. As a public character, however, he is more particularly illustrious, as connected with that system of education first introduced by Joseph Lancaster; and to which the name of the British and Foreign System of Education, has since been given. The development of that system marked an era in the moral destiny of mankind; and, in the possible universality of its application, Mr. Fox at once perceived all its value and importance; and, in combination with other illustrious individuals, he came forward to rescue it from destruction, by pecuniary aid to a very considerable amount, at a time when it had but few friends besides its founder. Ready to perish in its cradle, his hand was extended to protect it; and, with that constancy and perseverance which marked his character, he continued to watch over and promote its progress, up to the period of his death. Under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society, it is now advancing with something of the firm and steady step of manhood; and promises, under divine providence, to spread the blessing of moral and religious instruction, not only throughout the British dominions, but over each quarter of the habitable globe. With it, the name of Joseph Fox will be for ever united; and 'generations yet unborn,' who shall partake of the blessings, which it

Mr. Joseph Fox.

[1816.]

will perpetually bestow, will ‘rise up and call him blessed.’ By the noble and disinterested zeal, the unshaken constancy, and generous courage of this excellent man and his illustrious colleagues, that system was saved to the world, at the moment when ruin was ready to burst on the head of its founder. As one of the secretaries of the British and Foreign School Society, he has been constantly engaged in the promotion of its object; and, at the age of forty years, has closed his life, in the service of the *great cause of universal education*. The influence of his exertions in this cause, will be felt in many countries, and in every age; exertions for which a grateful posterity will embalm his memory in the odours of never-dying praise. At an early period, however, he has been permitted, through the merits of redeeming love, to attain a higher reward; and, when the generations of men shall have ceased, and knowledge shall have vanished away, it will still be his, to appropriate that sublime and imperishable promise, ‘They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.’

“On the evening preceding his departure, he requested a kind friend, who was with him, to read the seventeenth chapter of St. John, and the eighth chapter of Romans; he expressed that his reliance was upon Christ Jesus alone, for salvation; and, that whatever he had done, had been with a view to promote the Saviour’s glory. To the last, he appeared to possess the greatest composure of mind, and expired, without a struggle, in the arms of his tender mother-in-law, and his affectionate and only sister; calmly breathing out his soul into the bosom of his blessed Redeemer. They both followed his remains, with the rest of his mourning relatives. The committee of the British and Foreign School Society attended, amidst a large concourse of afflicted and attentive spectators. He was buried in the family vault, in Long Lane, Southwark, the burying ground of the late Rev. John Rogers, whose grandson he was. No one could possess more eminently than he did, that greatest perfection of the christian character—(*i. e.*) humility, as those that knew him best can testify. Whilst his memory is cherished with reverence and affection by his friends, may his example be imitated by all who

1810.]

Church in Grafton Street.

indulge the hope, that they also may hear the welcome sentence of ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ ”

CHURCH IN GRAFTON STREET.

WHEN the church in this place, under the care of Mr. John Martin, left it in 1797, it was taken by Mr. Richard Burnham and his people. Mr. Burnham (who, it is said, proved himself to be a real penitent, and a restored backslider) preached here till his death, which took place in 1810.

He was succeeded by Mr. John Stevens, who removed from Boston, in Lincolnshire, and settled over the church, June, 1811. In 1803, the church removed to York Street, St. James’s; and, in 1824, from thence to Meard’s Court. Respecting this removal, Mr. Stevens says:—

“I felt a wish to procure a place, if possible, of less dimension, less expense, and more suited to the wants of a church of our own denomination: we had no convenient vestries at York Street, nor could we have a baptistry.

“It was, on my part, a bold undertaking, to venture to build a place of the size, and with the conveniencies I wanted. Having reflected, prayed, and thought it over—as the Lord, whom I served, and for the defence of whose righteous cause I had suffered, had put it in my power to build, I determined to submit what I had, and trust him to bring me through. I said, he had provided before I had five pounds in the world; what I have is his. He gave himself for me—I only lay down a little money, and it may be reserved to me in his cause; and if not, his will be done. I proceeded, without the promise of five pounds from any one. I have been brought thus far through; and do hope the place will be settled in trust, and become the property of the church. It was opened for worship on the Lord’s day, September 19, 1824. We have now about three hundred and fifty members. The people have acted very liberally, according to their circumstances. They

Church in Church Street, Surrey Road.

[1786.]

have not raised so little as one thousand six hundred pounds since the erection; and are now going to put up two side galleries, for which the money is mostly promised before they begin. At the same time, we do not raise so little as one hundred pounds per annum for poor members, besides extra gifts in emergent cases. I believe the hand of the Lord is with us; though I often long to see and feel more of the sacred influence that flows from the chosen Head of the chosen body, ordained to perfection through the real redemption effected, when Jesus died for us."

CHURCH IN CHURCH-STREET, SURREY ROAD.

THE church assembling here was originated by a few persons who had separated themselves from that in Mitchel Street, Old Street Road. The place they met in was small, and had been used by Mr. Richard Burnham. It was built before Surrey Chapel was erected, by some persons who were Calvinistic Methodists.

Mr. James Upton, who had been called to the ministry by the church at Waltham Abbey, commenced preaching here July 24, 1785; and on September 21, of the same year, twelve persons were united in church fellowship. Mr. Upton was ordained June 27, 1786. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Hutchings, of Greenwich; Atwood, of Folkstone; Davis, of Waltham Abbey; Davis, of Reading; and Bligh, of Seven Oaks; whose daughter Mr. Upton had married.

Some few years after Mr. Upton's settlement, the meeting-house was almost entirely rebuilt, and very considerably enlarged. This is now one of the largest of our London churches.

1788.]

Church in Elim Place, Fetter Lane.

CHURCH IN ELIM-PLACE, FETTER LANE.

THERE was an old meeting-house near this place, which had been used by the Calvinistic Methodists. In 1778, Mr. Ebenezer Smith preached here, who has been mentioned as having left Eagle Street on account of his Arian sentiments. Mr. Abraham Austin, in 1785, settled here: the church then consisted of thirty-three members; he was ordained in February, 1786. In December, 1788, the meeting-house was burnt down, and soon after the present handsome chapel was built, and Mr. Austin and his people took possession of it.

The difficulties concerning Elim chapel, Mr. Austin, to his inexpressible satisfaction, lived in a great measure to surmount. The place was purchased at the commencement of the year 1814, for the sum of one thousand seven hundred pounds, and vested in nine trustees, for the use of the Particular Baptists. He had begun to collect for this sum, and met with great encouragement from his own congregation, and from others; but afflictions and death arrested his progress.

At the commencement of the year 1807, a circumstance occurred, which drew forth Mr. Austin's concern for the present and eternal welfare of the rising generation into lively exercise. A member of the church in Fetter Lane proposed himself as a candidate, to fill the situation of schoolmaster in a neighbouring dissenting charity-school, supported by the united subscriptions of Baptists and Pædobaptists. When the election came on, he was declared, by the managers of that institution, ineligible *on account of his sentiments concerning baptism!* Mr. Austin, and several members of the church, hearing of the grounds of their friend's ineligibility, concluded it was high time there should be in the centre of the metropolis, at least, one charity-school, in which not only the teachers might be Baptists, but where the children should be taught what they considered to be the truth of the scriptures concerning that ordinance. From these principles originated the Baptist Free School; the first address to the public in behalf of which was written by Mr. Austin, and advertised on the covers of the Evangelical Magazine. From its

Mr. Abraham Austin.

[1816.]

institution until his death, Mr. Austin took a deep and lively interest in the concerns of this school ; and, at one time, while in expectation of a schoolmaster from the country, he, for a few weeks, supplied the place by his own personal attention. The natural modesty and backwardness of Mr. Austin, prevented his uniting himself with the society of Baptist ministers in London, until advised so to do by a friend ; in consequence of which he applied, and was cordially received by that body. This also led to his being received as a member of the general body of Dissenting ministers, meeting at Dr. Williams's Library, Red-cross Street.

The church in Elim-Place soon after united with the Baptist monthly meeting, on which occasions Mr. Austin preached each year till his death ; and his judicious, evangelical, and experimental sermons at those seasons, will not soon be forgotten.

Notwithstanding the number of deaths and removals in the course of thirty years, at the death of Mr. Austin, the church consisted of one hundred and ninety-two members. The greatest unanimity and affection prevailed, and every thing indicated more abundant prosperity than they had ever enjoyed together. But God, whose ways are not as our ways, thought proper to remove his faithful servant, and bid him enter the joy of his Lord, on the evening of July 5, 1816, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

Mr. Austin was born at Sutton Colefield, a corporate town in Warwickshire, December 25, 1749. His father and grandfather, who were wardens of the town, were respectable timber-merchants and farmers. His father died of a consumption, when Mr. Austin was about six years of age, and within a year afterwards he lost his mother. These afflictive bereavements were the occasion of himself and two brothers, both younger than himself, being placed under the care of their grandfather, with whom they continued till his death. He appears to have entertained a high opinion of Abraham, as he gave him a good education, with the intention of training him up for the Church of England. His grandfather dying before this plan could be realized, was the cause of his being apprenticed to a respectable grocer in Birmingham.

1816.]

Mr. Abraham Austin.

In a conversation with a minister in September, 1813, Mr. Austin gave some account of his life ; and from the notes written immediately afterwards, many of the following particulars are derived. "My mind," said he, "was impressed with the importance of religion at eight years of age, and from that time till I left Birmingham in my twentieth year, I laboured hard by prayers, and an attendance upon the services and sacraments of the established church, to make myself a fit object for the divine favour. By my master and his family I was highly respected for my honesty and sobriety ; but my regard to divine things was treated with ridicule and contempt. Whilst in that place, I prayed that the Lord would be pleased to remove me back to Sutton, that I might be at liberty to attend to the concerns of my soul. I promised myself how much better I should be at Sutton, than I possibly could be at Birmingham : and was particularly pleased with the thought of the pleasure I should derive from the conversation of a religious woman who resided there. My prayer was soon remarkably answered. My uncle dying, who had lived in the farm since the death of my grandfather, I was sent for home. Settling my uncle's affairs, and the perplexity of my new situation, so entirely employed my thoughts, that I quite forgot all the resolutions I had made in my own strength respecting religion, and for which purpose I had prayed I might be removed to Sutton. About a fortnight after, the hurry of business beginning to subside, I recollected my former prayer and resolutions, and was deeply overwhelmed with the thought of my wretched conduct. The state of my mind was now truly distressing. But thinking of the good woman I before mentioned, I went to her, and told her my distress, when she lent me a book written by a Mr. Cudworth, in defence of Hervey's "Theron and Aspasio." This led me to consult that work also. The manner in which Mr. Hervey states the way of a sinner's acceptance in the sight of God, appeared in my mind as just what I wanted. I thought with myself, if this be true, then there is hope. Till now, though I had read the Bible from my childhood, I had never thought of searching it for the purpose of finding the way of salvation. I now, however, resolved upon comparing the sentiments of Mr. Hervey with the scripture, to 'see whether those things

Mr. Abraham Austin.

[1816.]

were so.' By this means, my soul was brought to enjoy the liberty of the gospel. The ground of my hope then, was precisely the same as that which supports my mind at this present time; viz. the declaration of divine truth, concerning the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's work to justify the ungodly!"

Mr. Austin was now a humble believer in the Lord Jesus; having, by faith, "access into the grace in which believers stand, he rejoiced in hope of the glory of God." Receiving the free and full declaration of the gospel, that "eternal life was in the Son of God, for all who believed in Jesus," he "ceased from his own works," and "entered into rest." He now found that pardon and life were freely bestowed upon "him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly." "Labouring, and heavy laden," he went to Jesus, and simply trusting to the validity of the Saviour's promise—"Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out," he found "rest" to his soul. Like Bunyan's "Christian," through looking at the cross of Christ, he found the burden of guilt and anxiety fall from his back, and his soul was filled with joy and peace, through believing, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It was about a year after this period, in 1770, that he began to preach. The circumstances which led to it were singular, and deserving of notice. It should seem that his aunt had still entertained the idea of his being a clergyman of the Church of England, and that she had taken means to send him to the university of Cambridge: but, as Mr. Austin had previously been thinking seriously on the principles of dissent, on the day it was intended he should go to Cambridge, he fully resolved that he would take his stand with the Dissenters, and refused to go to the university. The Rev. Mr. Ryland, who was curate at Sutton, used to preach at a house in Mare Pool. Mr. Austin attended his ministry; but some other person who preached there, much to the dissatisfaction of Mr. Austin, did not point out the way of salvation clearly. "One morning," said Mr. Austin, "after he had preached, I ventured thus to accost him: 'Sir, you have been calling our attention to a very important subject, and have told us what we must do before we can have hope: but suppose any one should die before he becomes the character you describe,

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Mr. Abraham Austin.

what becomes of him?' The preacher replied, 'Can you tell me a better way?' 'Yes,' said I, 'I think I can: the work of Christ is a complete work, and all-sufficient to justify the ungodly, who are invited under their present character, to put their trust in him.' The minister seemed to think this was a very easy way for a sinner to obtain heaven, and intimated it would never do." It was not long after, that the minister neglecting to come on one occasion to preach at Mare Pool, and the people not willing to discontinue the public service, sent for Mr. Austin to pray, and to read a sermon. With this request he complied; but after beginning to read the sermon he had selected, it did not please himself; he therefore delivered his own sentiments, the people not knowing but they were read from the book which he still held in his hand. This circumstance was not known, till Mr. Austin mentioned it to a young man to whom his conversation had been rendered useful: from this time, his kind friend was constantly wishing him to preach; and at length, when he could no longer resist his arguments, he complied. The people, approving of his ministry, insisted on his continuing to address them; but as it would have given offence for him to have preached in the house which the minister had previously occupied, they procured another house in Mare Pool, in the parish of Sutton Colefield, where Mr. Austin commenced preaching regularly as a dissenting minister.

He soon afterwards fitted up a place of worship at his own expense, in the town of Sutton, where he resided; and a congregation was collected. Here he continued his labours for about five years, without any emolument, carrying on the business of malt-ing for the support of himself and his younger brothers.

When he first began to preach, he met with violent opposition; stones, and other substances, being often thrown at him while preaching. Notwithstanding this, he was not affrighted or discouraged: the work of the Lord so evidently prospered in his hands, that many, through his instrumentality, were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Among the first fruits of his ministry were his two brothers, both of whom died before him, triumphing in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. The recollection of these instances of his usefulness always afforded him

Mr. Abraham Austin.

[1816.]

a high degree of joy, which he often mentioned with feelings of peculiar delight.

He was, all this period, a Pædobaptist, baptizing children without having questioned the propriety of the practice, or examined the arguments for its support. It is not exactly known in what year he became a Baptist; but being in London about 1776, whilst minister of the congregation at Sutton, he was requested, by a friend, to baptize his infant, and to address the company assembled upon the subject. Examining the scriptures to furnish himself with arguments for the occasion, he found considerable difficulty, and his speaking was attended with so much embarrassment and distress of mind, that when he concluded the service, he said, "I have done that now, which I am determined never to repeat." He was firm to his purpose, and never afterwards sprinkled an infant.

Mr. Austin having seen the impropriety of sprinkling infants, very soon embraced the principles of the Baptists, and was baptized on a profession of his repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, by Mr. Hickling, a general Baptist minister, at Longford, Warwickshire. Many of his congregation were soon convinced of the propriety of the sentiments which he had adopted, and it was not long after he had the pleasure of witnessing the baptism of fifteen of them, in a river near the place of worship in Sutton Colefield. He now united himself with the ministers of the "New Connection" of General Baptists, who, on account of the erroneous sentiments of that body, had lately broken off from them, in order to profess the principles by which the founders of that denomination had been distinguished; viz. the principles maintained in the celebrated work of the Rev. Thomas Grantham, entitled, "Primitive Christianity," &c. One of Mr. Austin's most early friends was the Rev. Dan Taylor, with whom, at that time, he cordially united in his theological opinions; and with whom, through life, he maintained the most friendly intercourse.

The present pastor, Mr. James Elvey, who had been a Pædobaptist minister at Wandsworth, having been baptized, succeeded Mr. Austin. The church is united and respectable.

1762.]

Church in Unicorn Yard.

. CHURCH IN BLANDFORD STREET.

THE meeting-house, which was built by Mr. Cadby, a member of Mr. Martin's church, was opened June 23, 1793. The church was formed September 26, 1794. Dr. Jenkins became its pastor June, 1795. He left in May 1797, on account of the income being insufficient for his support, and settled at Walworth. Mr. John Keeble succeeded, and was ordained October 31, 1796, and continued with them till his death. The present pastor, Mr. Jabez Dawson, was ordained on what is called "Good Friday," 1826.

CHURCH IN UNICORN YARD.

THE successor to the Rev. Josiah Thompson was Mr. William Nash Clarke, son of Mr. Abraham Clarke, who was, in his last days, pastor of the Baptist church at Blunham, in Bedfordshire. William received his first religious impressions under the ministry of the Rev. George Whitfield, when about ten years of age. He was baptized, and joined the church in Devonshire Square, but soon after united with that in Little Wild Street, then under the care of Dr. Joseph Stennett. Here he was called to the work of the ministry, and for several years was a student to Dr. Llewellyn, till his academy at Hammersmith was given up. Mr. Clarke was after this a short time with Dr. Samuel Stennett.

He was ordained over the church in Unicorn Yard in October, 1762. The church was in very low and dejected circumstances, but the ministry of Mr. Clarke was so acceptable, that in about twenty years upwards of an hundred and twenty members joined it; and for that long season, it is said, perhaps no pastor and people were more happy in each other. About the close of that period, he felt such discouragement from not seeing any fruit of

Mr. William Nash Clarke.

[1790.]

his labours, that in March 1785 he resigned the pastoral office. He was for a considerable time unsettled, and supplied different destitute congregations. Dr. Rippon, his biographer, remarks on this period of his life :—

“With one of these societies it was thought he would have settled ; but, after a fair trial, it was evident his preaching could not suit them ; for they were desirous that he should be often saying, how much a person might live in sin, and nevertheless be a child of God ; whereas he was frequently shewing, how far a person might go under a profession of religion, and yet be an enemy of God and a child of the devil.”

About the year 1790 he removed to Exeter, where, it is said, he laboured with much acceptance and usefulness till his death, in 1795.

“About six months before his last affliction, he was seized with a violent pain, which rendered him unable to set his foot to the ground ; and after this attack, occasioned perhaps by living too low, he was never quite well. On Lord’s-day, July 19th, he was seized with such a fainting fit, as induced a fear that he could not be recovered from it ; however, he revived a little, and the hopes of his friends bloomed, but by very alarming symptoms they were soon blighted. The following Tuesday, an amiable christian brother visited him, informing him that the church was going to meet for prayer on his account. On hearing this, he desired the church might be informed, that ‘his views were fixed on the heavenly state. That he was contemplating that state as an holy one ; and it afforded him much pleasure to think on the employment as perfectly holy, on the company as all holy, and the enjoyments as all holy : there would be nothing to disturb the long and lasting repose of the happy inhabitants ; and above all,’ he added with delightful energy, ‘I shall see my Jesus face to face.’ That night, though his pain was great, in his waking moments he possessed a calm serenity, and frequently alluded to Dr. Watts’s paraphrase on the 146 psalm.

I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs ;

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My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, or thought, or being last,
Or immortality endures.

On this last line he laid a particular emphasis.

“To a young minister, Mr. Sprague, who went to see him on Wednesday, he said, ‘I know not what the Lord is about to do; but he will do all things well.’ A few minutes after, with much seriousness and affection, he took him by the hand, and said, ‘My dear brother, I now see and feel the importance of those things that I have so much insisted on in my preaching, respecting the nature of true religion, and which has occasioned me some enemies. I hope the Lord will bless you, and help you to go forward in your work as you have begun: but be sure you must meet with enemies, for as there are so many refuges of lies, in which multitudes put their confidence, when you insist on the nature of genuine religion, they will be offended. Numbers wish to be made happy *by* God, but the truly religious wish to be made happy *in* God.’

“Through the rest of the week he was comfortable in his soul, and gave suitable advice to all who came near him. On Saturday he appeared to be in a waiting posture for the coming of his Lord. A young man, one of the first fruits of his ministry at Exeter, coming in, he said to him, ‘You are my joy; and I hope you will be the crown of my rejoicing. My joy has been increased by the uniform walk you have hitherto maintained. Expect temptations in your future warfare, but cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.’ This was a weeping season to all present. The same frame of mind he possessed on the Lord’s-day, though he was in much pain. Monday, he said, ‘It is almost over.’ Finding death evidently approaching, he would be raised on his knees in the bed to pray, but was so weak that he was forced to rest on his elbow. He was earnest and excellent. First he commended himself to the Lord. Twice he prayed for the church, and twice for Mrs. Clarke, then for the cause of Christ at large, not forgetting the missionaries among the heathen; and finally closed with a solemn surrender of himself again unto God. Tuesday, he told a friend that ‘he was happy in having the people of God with

Mr. William Nash Clarke.

[1795.]

him ; that he was not to change his company, but only his state ; he should still be with God's people, and they would be all perfect.' This night, between his slumbers, he was quite composed, frequently saying, 'Come—come—come, Lord Jesus.' A dear friend replied, 'He is just come ;' to which he answered, 'Yes.' He often had recourse to the 567th hymn of the Selection, 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,' &c. On Wednesday morning his speech began to fail him ; but in the after part of the day he called his much-loved wife to him, and in a most solemn manner said, 'God bless you all—farewell !' Yet after this, about two hours before he died, he listened with much pleasure to several passages quoted by a friend, descriptive of the heavenly state, especially this, 'they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads ;' to which he replied, 'A distinguishing mark, and an unspeakable pleasure.'

"The same friend, fearing it was painful for him to speak, repeated a verse out of one of Dr. Doddridge's hymns, desiring him to hold up his hand if he found himself happy. When these lines of it had been mentioned,

' And dying, clasp thee in mine arms,
The antidote of death,'

he held up both his hands, and clasped them together with a degree of earnestness beyond what it was thought his strength would have permitted. After this, he discovered some tokens of distress ; but being asked 'Is all well ?' he replied, 'All is well,' and added nothing more, but 'Come—come, Lord ;' and about nine o'clock, July 29th, his Lord came, when this faithful servant fell asleep in Jesus, having entered on the sixty-fourth year of his age. The following Lord's-day evening his remains were carried from his house, and deposited in the Baptist burying-ground in Parish Street, Exon. The Rev. Mr. Giles, a minister of the Independent denomination, lately come to that city, obligingly performed the funeral service ; and the next sabbath, the Rev. Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, in consequence of Mr. Clarke's desire, delivered the funeral sermon from Heb. xii. 23."

His biographer says, in describing his character, "he was a

1795.]

Mr. William Nash Clarke.

man of unaffected gravity, yet cheerful and affable, and so easy of access, that the religious poor found it not difficult to converse freely with him on the important concerns of their souls. He was remarkable for prudence and sweetness of temper, united with firmness and steady attachment to the truth. His preaching was practical and searching, under a conviction of the danger and spread of Antinomianism. His concern was not so much that the people of his charge should be able disputants, as that they should exemplify the genuine influence of christian doctrines in an holy, humble, exemplary walk and conversation. Nor did he only preach in the pulpit, but out of it. His deportment uniformly exemplified the truth of the apostle's assertion, that 'the grace of God teacheth to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in 'this present evil world.' His people were witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he behaved, and how he exhorted and comforted, and charged every one under his care, as a father does his children, that they would walk worthy of God. If some were ready to think he drew the christian character in an high style, they should remember that he kept the same mark in view which he set before others, and was constant and unwearied in pressing towards it. While he extolled the Redeemer, and shewed what Christ is, he also shewed what christians should be, as they are his followers. He was not only a warm, pathetic preacher himself, but an encourager of such by his frequent attendance on their occasional services.

"As a scholar, his acquirements were considerable. The degree of A. M. was conferred on him by the college at Providence, Rhode Island, in the year 1769. The Particular Baptist Fund in London judged him a proper person to instruct others whose views were directed to sanctuary service;* and several were

* The principal persons who studied under Mr. Clarke were, Mr. John Sandys, of Harlow; Mr. Leonard Ray, afterwards of Aberdeen; Mr. George Hall, of Ipswich; Mr. William Button, of London; Mr. Daniel Gillard, formerly of Folkstone, afterwards at Hammersmith; Mr. J. Brown, of Potter's Street, near Harlow; and Henry Coxo Mason, A. M. Southwark, who finished his education at Oxford. Of these seven the first four

Mr. William Nash Clarke.

[1795.]

placed under his tuition. Yet little or nothing of human literature appeared in his public discourses. So remote was he from pedantry, that it might be truly said he was ‘clothed with humility,’ always entertaining the highest opinion of the talents of others, and the meanest of his own. Though repeatedly intreated to publish several discourses delivered occasionally, and some statedly, yet, such was his extreme modesty, that he could not be prevailed on to suffer any thing of his to appear in print, except a funeral oration or two; an introductory service at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Booth; a sermon preached to the church at Maze-pond upon their declaration of having chosen the Rev. Mr. James Dore for their pastor; and an address to the church in Broadmead, Bristol, on the settlement of the Rev. Dr. Ryland.*

“Whilst he was possessed of rich and heavenly treasure, the vessel into which it was put was truly earthen. A disorder of the epileptic kind was interwoven with his constitution, to which in the latter part of his life was added that painful complaint to which hard students are more or less subject—the stone; yet he bore all with serenity, fortitude, and holy resignation to the divine will.

“The following, taken from a manuscript called, ‘The Parsonic Garden,’ in which numerous ministers are compared to different shrubs and flowers, may serve as an

EPITAPH

On the Rev. WILLIAM CLARKE, A. M.

Clarke, a Sweet-William, whose expanded breast,
With every grace, indulgent heaven had blest;
Judicious, humble, affable and calm,
His mind was beauty, and his breath was balm.”

were called to the ministry by the church at Unicorn Yard, while Mr. Clarke was pastor of it, and also Mr. Peter Edwards. Mr. Joseph Sprague, and Mr. Samuel Rumson, were sent into the sacred work under Mr. Clarke’s direction while he was pastor at Exeter.

* He left a manuscript on the subject of Open Communion, which has lately been printed with a new edition of Dr. Ryland’s work on Baptism.

1817.]

Churches in Burton and Henrietta Streets.

Mr. Daniel Williams, his immediate successor at Unicorn Yard, but who left it in 1794, is still living at Fairford, in Gloucestershire; Mr. Thomas Hutchings is lately deceased. The present pastor is Mr. George Gibbs, author of an excellent pamphlet on the subject of Baptism, in which all the arguments for our peculiar sentiments are judiciously condensed and arranged.

CHURCHES IN BURTON STREET AND HENRIETTA STREET.

THE place in which this congregation assembled is a large lecture room, and had been procured for public worship by some persons who had peaceably separated from the church in Keppel Street, on account of Mr. George Pritchard having been chosen its pastor. The church was formed September 17, 1817. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Griffin, Ivimey, and Sowerby; and Dr. Newman, who delivered an address to the church, which he concluded by wishing them to consider themselves as lighting up another lamp in the city, and hoped it would burn with a strong, steady, clear, brilliant, and lasting light to Him to whom they had devoted themselves.

The first pastor of this church was Mr. William Belcher, formerly of Worcester. Soon after, a separation from the church in Little Wild Street, on account of Mr. John Edwards giving up his pastoral office, united with them, and the latter minister filled the office of assistant to Mr. Belcher. Thus strengthened, they built a larger place of worship in Henrietta Street. Soon after it was finished, Mr. Edwards, and the people who had left Wild Street with him, returned to the former place in Burton Street. Mr. Edwards has left them, and is settled at

Church in East Lane, Walworth.

[1791.]

Watford; and Mr. Thomas Blundell, formerly of Northampton, preached to them for a year, when the church was dissolved.

For some time Mr. Belcher continued his ministry at Henrietta Street, but left the church in 1826. He has since become the pastor of the church at Greenwich. The church has lately been much increased by a secession of members from another church in the neighbourhood. Mr. Thomas Thomas, a young man from Stepney academy, is its pastor, having been recently ordained.

CHURCH IN EAST LANE, WALWORTH.

THE meeting-house in East Lane was built for the preaching of the gospel about 1780, principally by the exertions of a Mrs. Hill: it has been three times enlarged. It is now about 60 feet by 30, and is held on lease. Some persons had assembled there for eleven years, but had not been formed into a church state, when they invited Mr. Joseph Swain to preach to them, which he first did on Thursday evening, June 19, 1791.

This popular and useful minister had been recently called to the work of the ministry by Dr. Rippon's church in Carter Lane. His labours at Walworth were rendered very useful; so that in December 13, 1791, a church was formed, and Mr. Swain was earnestly intreated to settle with them as their pastor. He was ordained over them on February 8, 1792. The Rev. Dr. Rippon, Messrs. Thomas, Upton, and Giles, afterwards of Eyethorn, conducted the services of the day.

Mr. Swain preached a Lord's day evening lecture at Devonshire Square meeting for several years; and attracted, by his evangelical manner and style of preaching, a large congregation. But his labours were soon terminated, as he was taken away by

1796.]

Mr. Joseph Swain.

death April 14, 1796, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. Mr. Booth delivered the address at the grave; Dr. Rippōn preached the next Lord's day from John xiii. 7; and Mr. Upton preached his funeral sermon from Acts xx. 36—38. (which was published) at Surrey Chapel, kindly lent for the purpose, as the meeting-house at Walworth was not sufficiently large. He died much lamented, and his memory is yet precious.

He wrote several small works, but his principal production is a "Poem on Redemption," to an edition of which his memoir has been prefixed, from which the following extracts are taken:—

"Previous to his last illness, which was comparatively short, but very affecting, (being for a considerable part of the time under the power of a strong delirium,) his health had been for a course of time gradually declining. But with reference to that afflictive and solemn scene, which terminated in the removal of this excellent and useful man, a few paragraphs from his funeral sermon, by Mr. Upton, shall be laid before the reader.

" 'As to the first part of Mr. Swain's affliction, (says Mr. Upton,) both he and his friends were equally unapprehensive of his life being in danger. The frame of his mind seemed serene and comfortable. He appeared much concerned about his church, with regard to the first Lord's-day of his confinement, it being the returning season for breaking of bread; and still more on account of those persons who were to have been received into communion on that day.

" 'Two of Dr. Watts's sermons were read to him, and he expressed great pleasure in hearing them. He said, 'they had been the means of his enjoying some nearness to God in prayer.' In conversation with christian friends, he frequently said, 'he hoped it was a sanctified affliction.'

" 'On Thursday (a week before his death) he said, 'he had been lamenting that he could not read the word of God, because of his great weakness: ' but he recollected that he could read, as it were, without the book; and repeated the fourteenth chapter of John, and the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, with some other passages of the sacred scriptures. He then said, 'Now I can give advice to afflicted persons when I visit them, to do the same.'

Mr. Joseph Swain.

[1796.]

He added, 'If persons were to accustom themselves to commit things to memory, it would be of great advantage, particularly to those who complain that their recollection is bad.'

" 'He was grieved to hear that a member on the Lord's-day before had absented himself in consequence of his not being able to preach; sent his love to the church by one of the deacons; and begged that if they wished not to grieve him, but to testify their love to him in his affliction, they would keep close to each other in the ways of God.

" 'This evening he had a violent fit, which left him apparently senseless for some hours. But when he came to himself, he conversed in a very peculiar manner, as though he had been taking a retrospective view of his whole life. Upon Mrs. Swain entering the room, he said, 'O, my dear, I have been offering some petitions to God for you, which I am sure will be answered, I am *sure* they will be answered.'

" 'On the Saturday night following, for about three hours, he was favoured with the full use of his reason, and conversed as a dying man. He said to Mrs. Swain, 'O my dear, I perceive I have been under a mistake; I thought I was getting better, but I now feel I am very bad. I have been seeking the Lord about my case, and can get no other answer than this,—'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.' On seeing her much affected, he said, 'O my dear, don't grieve; the Lord can make you a happy widow. You were happy in the Lord before you knew me, and he can make you happy when I am gone.' He reminded her also of a christian friend who had been greatly supported and comforted under the loss of a valuable husband. He then exclaimed, 'O my dear Redeemer! Am I coming to thee so soon? Is my work done? It is just fourteen years since I first knew thee, Lord! if it were thy will, I should rejoice to labour a little longer with the dear people:—yet not my will, but thine be done.'

" 'He then took his wife by the hand, and prayed very fervently for her and for the dear children; also for his church at Walworth, and on behalf of those who attended his lecture near Devonshire Square. After which he conversed about temporal

1796.]

Mr. Joseph Swain.

concerns ; and then returning to the solemn subject of death, he said, ‘ I am not afraid to die ; I have not the shadow of a doubt ; I know that I shall receive my crown. Yet I should be glad to be engaged in my Lord’s work a little longer, if it were his will.’ He then exhorted those around him to aim living near to God, and to wrestle with him in prayer, for the fulfilment of his gracious promises.

“ ‘ On the Lord’s-day morning he was much in prayer for the church, and proceeded as regularly as though he had been in public. The minister who was to supply his place at Walworth that morning called to see him, and engaged in prayer with him. But he could not attend long : the delirium came on so violently, that he was not able to converse many minutes together, but often seemed to be engaged in ejaculatory prayer.’

“ ‘ What a mercy it was that before the fatal disease commenced, he ‘ knew in whom he had believed ;’ and that he had committed his immortal all into the hand of Jesus Christ ! Happy for the real christian, that neither bodily disease, nor mental derangement, that no enemy, nor any affliction, is able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The writer, in the year 1794, often heard him preach, and the following beautiful lines will give some tolerable idea of his talents and spirit.

“ I love to think of heaven, where I shall meet
My fellow travellers, and where no more
With grief or sin my mind will be disturb’d ;
Where holy saints, and holy angels dwell,
In constant harmony, and mutual love.
But when my heart anticipates the sight
Of God incarnate, wearing on his side,
And hands, and feet, those marks of love divine,
Which he on Calvary for me endur’d,
All heaven beside is swallowed up in this ;
And he who is my hope of heaven below,
Appears the glory of my heav’n above.”

After several ministers had been supplying on probation, the church at length fixed on Dr. Joseph Jenkins, who took the

Church in Lion Street, Walworth.

[1805.]

pastoral charge in April 1798, and continued until December 1818. He died in February, 1819. Mr. Pritchard, of Keppel Street, preached the funeral sermon.

Dr. Jenkins was originally a member of the church in Little Wild Street. He was a learned man, having spent several years in Aberdeen; from whence, I believe, he received his diploma. He was for several years at Wrexham, but coming to London, he became pastor of a newly raised church in Blandford Street. He was the author of several small works, and published some single sermons. His chief work was "An Answer to the Candid Reasons of the Rev. Peter Edwards, of Portsea."

Several ministers were sent out by the church during this period. Mr. John Rogers was dismissed to Eynsford, in Kent, September, 1802. Mr. Seymour, who first went to Wallingford, to assist Mr. Robert Lovegrove, and has since been at many different places. My correspondent adds: "And others who have departed from the truth; one we believe has embraced Socinianism; another is said to have singular views of revealed truth; and many others who have run without being sent."

Mr. Richard Davis came from Plymouth Dock to this church, and was ordained in January, 1820. The ministers engaged in the service were Messrs. Ivimey, Upton, Chin, and Timothy Thomas.

CHURCH IN LION STREET, WALWORTH.

THE church in this street was composed of some members who, in the year 1805, left the church in East Lane. They built a very small meeting-house, and soon after chose the Rev. John Chin as their pastor. The meeting-house has been several times enlarged, and will now accommodate nine hundred persons.

1796.]

Church at Hackney.

The church is large, and the congregation very considerable. Mr. Chin is living, and has been rendered very useful. He has published a sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. John Keeble, of Blandford Street, and some small pieces.

CHURCH IN ALFRED PLACE, KENT ROAD.

A VERY good sized meeting-house was built here, in 1819, by several persons who separated from the church in East Lane. A church was formed soon after, and Mr. Young, the present pastor, was settled over it. A liberal female, one of the members, has not long since paid off all the remaining debt on the place, amounting to upwards of five hundred pounds.

CHURCH AT HACKNEY.

THIS church originated through the labours of Mr. John Rance, a plain but very respectable minister. It is thus narrated in Dr. Rippon's Register, vol. iii. p. 23:—

“Two or three Baptist friends belonging to Mr. Booth's church, and residing in Hackney, finding it very inconvenient, as their families increased, to attend divine service at their own place, in November, 1796, opened a small house in Shore-place, Hackney, for afternoon service only; they procured various preachers from time to time; the congregation increased, and, in 1797, the place was enlarged: hitherto they had service only once a day, but it was thought proper to have it both forenoon and afternoon: this was done the first Lord's-day in the year 1798, and has been continued. Mr. John Rance was invited September 25, 1797,

Church at Old Ford, or Bow.

[1785.]

to preach to them a month, and afterwards to continue his services : and still finding a steady, serious, and increasing auditory attend, they judged it prudent to be embodied as a church, which was accordingly done, May 13, 1798, by Mr. Booth and Mr. Button. Mr. Rance then received an invitation to preach three months longer, with a view to undertake the pastoral charge. At present the place is too small ; about two hundred attend in the afternoon, and in the morning about one hundred and fifty. Mr. Rance was ordained October 3, 1798, in the Rev. Mr. Palmer's meeting-house, St. Thomas's Square, Hackney. The principal parts of the service were performed by Dr. Jenkins, Mr. Booth, and Mr. Upton."

This worthy pastor finished his course, February 13, 1807. He was succeeded by Mr. Bradley, from the forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire, August 25, 1808 ; who, at Christmas, 1810, left them, and returned to his people at Cosely. The next pastor was Dr. F. A. Cox, who was ordained October 3, 1811, and has been very successful. Since his settlement at Hackney, a very handsome commodious meeting-house in Mare Street has been erected, which is well filled. It was opened for worship, November 12, 1812 ; since which galleries have been erected."

CHURCH AT OLD FORD, OR BOW.

THE Baptist church in Old Ford was formed June 21, 1785. Eight persons were then united in fellowship, whose names were John Knott, pastor ; Edmund Dorrell, John Standfast, Mary Dorrell, Mary Knott, Mary White, Mary Brown, and Elizabeth Shepherd ; of these, the last-mentioned is the only survivor, and is now with us. William Welch (still living), Edward Bishop, Frances Manning, and Ruth How, were added before the end of the year. The congregation assembled in a slight frail building on the bank of the river Lea, and near to Bow bridge.

The first pastor was Mr. John Knott, who came from Eyethorne, in Kent, in the decline of life, and after a few years'

1829.]

Dr. Newman.

honourable labour, died January 30, 1793. The following is the testimony borne to his character by his successor, the Rev. Dr. Newman :—" His life and ministry were a sweet savour of Christ. His name is always mentioned by those who remember him, with warm and tender affection."

Mr. (now Dr.) Newman commenced preaching here in January 1793, but his ordination did not take place till May 15, 1794. " On that day," says Dr. Newman, " to me so memorable and important, after singing the 419th hymn in the Selection, Mr. Upton prayed ; Mr. Timothy Thomas delivered a short introductory discourse, and received the account of the church, with my confession of faith ; Mr. Button prayed ; my late pastor, Mr. John Davis, of Waltham Abbey, gave the charge from Ezra viii. 18, ' And by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding.' Mr. Booth addressed the church from Eph. v. 1, ' Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.' Mr. Fleming concluded in prayer."

The place soon became too small, and on Whit-Monday, May 25, 1801, the present place of worship was opened by the Rev. Dr. Rippon, who preached from 2 Cor. vi. 13, " Be ye also enlarged." The late Rev. George Ford, of Stepney, preached in the afternoon, from Psalm cx. 2, " The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." By exertions, strenuous and long-continued, with the assistance of some friends in London, and some in the country, contributions were raised sufficient to pay for the front gallery. The side pews, and a few benches with backs, were brought from the former place of worship.

In 1807, two side galleries were erected. The collections for this object were made principally by the Sunday-school teachers, that the front gallery might be chiefly appropriated to the children under their direction.

Dr. Newman says, " From the articles of agreement in the church book, I perceive that the church was from its commencement in strict communion, and so it continues, and I hope will continue till Christ shall come again."

Church at Somers Town.

[1795.]

CHURCH AT SOMERS TOWN.

THE following account of its origin is extracted from Dr. Rippon's Register, vol. iii. p. 149 :—

“ In the month of September, 1795, Mr. Jarman, a member of the Baptist church at Walworth, (by whom he was called out to the work of the ministry) begun preaching out of doors in the neighbourhood of Somers Town. He at first met with great opposition ; but his preaching being the means of awakening several persons, one of them invited him to preach at his house in Somers Town, which accordingly was registered for that purpose. On the 26th of March, 1796, ten persons, most of whom had been called by grace under Mr. Jarman's ministry, after making a profession of their repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, (their moral characters being well attested,) were baptized, and formed themselves into a church, in the presence of the late Mr. Joseph Swain, of Walworth, and of several other respectable witnesses.

“ The greatest part of the poor inhabitants of Somers Town are in such extreme distress, as not to be able to pay for the education of their children : hence a Sunday school has been instituted, and the scholars are instructed gratis by some of the members of the church. The congregation soon increased so considerably, that the house which had been licensed was not large enough to contain the auditory. Mr. Jarman was therefore advised, by several respectable friends, to endeavour to raise a subscription for building a meeting-house ; and a piece of ground in Brill Street, Somers Town, was obtained upon a lease of eighty-four years, at the rent of eight pounds per annum ; upon which a small place of worship has been erected, which was opened in the month of April, 1797, and is vested for the benefit of the church in thirteen trustees. The meeting-house is a substantial brick building, finished with a studious regard to plainness and frugality, and is therefore furnished for the most part with forms. The whole expense of its erection amounted to 387*l.* 18*s.* of which 277*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* had been some time since collected, chiefly in the metropolis : since then, Mr. Jarman has visited several of

1814.]

Church at Highgate.

the churches in Essex, Suffolk, and [Norfolk; and, by their assistance, has discharged the whole sum.

“On Wednesday the 28th of February, 1798, Mr. Jarman was ordained to the pastoral office. The Rev. W. Button began the service with prayer, and reading several passages of scripture. The Rev. William Smith delivered the introductory discourse, and proposed the usual questions. A short account of the rise and formation of the church was given; and Mr. Jarman delivered a confession of his faith. Then Dr. Rippon prayed the ordination prayer, and was assisted, in the laying on of hands, by the Rev. Abraham Booth, and others. Mr. Booth, then, in a sermon of about fifty minutes, preached to the pastor and the church. The Rev. William Shenstone conducted the work of praise, in the several parts of this service; which was concluded in prayer by the Rev. James Dore.

“This church, some months since, had increased to twenty-six members; all of whom are inhabitants of Somers Town and its vicinity: and several other persons had proposed themselves for communion.”

After this account was written by Dr. Rippon, they purchased a large episcopal chapel in Wilsted Street. This being consumed by fire, a place was built. Mr. Jarman is still living, but some years since resigned his office. Mr. Charles Carpenter is now the pastor.

CHURCH AT HIGHGATE.

THE following extract from a letter sent by the church at Highgate, dated March 13, 1814, to the church in Eagle Street, will shew the origin of this interest:—“It is now nearly five years since the word of the Lord sounded forth from you to this village, at which time some of us were sitting in the darkness of the shadow of death, and others of us, though we trust we had known the Lord, yet we had not, like Caleb, followed him fully; but through divine mercy, have since known the pleasures connected

Church at Hammersmith.

[1780.]

with obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, by being baptized, and by uniting together for christian fellowship.

“We wish further to express our christian affection to your brethren, on account of the zeal manifested by some of your members, and to your dear pastor for furthering this good work : it is to them we are obliged for obtaining our place of worship, and fitting it up for our use.”

The first pastor was Mr. Mileham, who afterwards settled at Portsea, now at Stoke Newington. His successor, Mr. Edward Lewis, is the present pastor.

CHURCH IN PARADISE STREET, CHELSEA.

THE church meeting in this place had been formed October 22, 1817, in a small chapel in Sloane Place, Knightsbridge. The ministry of Mr. Owen Clarke, now of Bath, having been rendered useful, and the place being too small, the chapel in Paradise Street was taken, and opened September 24, 1817, when Mr. Clarke was ordained the pastor.

Mr. Clarke was succeeded by Mr. Hutchings, a son of the late Mr. Hutchings of Unicorn Yard : he has lately left it, and gone to Newark ; the church is now destitute.

CHURCH AT HAMMERSMITH.

A CHURCH was formed at Hammersmith, March 24, 1780. The meeting-house in which they assembled was built in the garden of Mr. Naylor. This was afterwards converted into four tenements ; and the present chapel, built by the same gentleman, was opened January 6, 1788. In a short time after, in consequence of awful dissensions, the church was dissolved. The meeting-house was shut up for a year, and was then let to a clergyman of the Establishment, who conducted the worship after

1811.]

Church in Cotten Street, Poplar.

the forms of the Church of England, and inscribed over the door "Trinity Chapel." At the end of two years, the clergyman not finding the concern to answer, some of the members of the former Baptist church re-opened it on August 4, 1793. They spent part of a day (October 30) in humiliation and prayer; and on November 10, thirteen baptized persons were formed into a new church. For upwards of ten years they obtained supplies for the Lord's days; and the society of Baptist ministers, which then met at the Jamaica coffee-house, Cornhill, assisted them by preaching a lecture of a Tuesday evening: these were Messrs. Booth, Timothy Thomas, Thomas Thomas, Button, Smith, (of Eagle Street,) Sowerby, Swain, Upton, Dore, Penny, and Martin.

In March, 1801, they applied to Mr. Thomas Uppadine, a member of the church under the care of Mr. Pearce, at Birmingham, then supplying the church at Bourton-on-the-water. He accepted their invitation, and was subsequently ordained, September 27, 1803.

The meeting-house, burying-ground, &c. were purchased by the church in 1802; and in 1819, in consequence of the increase of the congregation, it was considerably enlarged, at a cost of upwards of eight hundred pounds. It will now hold six hundred persons, and has a large school-room adjoining. Mr. Uppadine has been very successful in his ministry, and has a united prosperous church.

CHURCH IN COTTEN STREET, POPLAR.

THE commodious meeting-house erected for the use of the Baptists in this large and maritime district, was opened for public worship, April 15, 1811. The church was formed March 27, 1812. Mr. John Coles (now of Oakingham) was ordained November 5, 1813, Mr. James Upton, jun. (the eldest son of Mr.

Church at Clapham Common.

[1798.]

Upton, of Church Street,) was ordained May 16, 1821. In 1823, a gallery was added for the accommodation of sailors. The congregation has had to struggle with great difficulties, in consequence of a large debt having been contracted by an improvident expenditure in the building of the meeting-house; from which they are not yet altogether relieved.

CHURCH AT CLAPHAM COMMON.

THIS church has been for many years under the pastoral care of Mr. John Ovington. It is one of those endowed by the will of Mr. Abraham Atkins, who resided at Clapham, and who, beside the endowment, made this church the residuary legatee to his freehold estates, to which in a few years it will become entitled.

The following account was published in the third volume of Dr. Rippon's Register, in 1798:—

“ List of Churches endowed by the late Abraham Atkins, Esq. of Clapham, Surry.

Churches.	Ministers in 1798.
Beach Hill.....	John Wills.
Buckland, Berks	Joseph Stennett.
Burford, Oxford	William Harris.
Cambridge.....	Robert Hall.
Cirencester, Gloucestershire..	William Wilkins.
Coat, Oxon	Joseph Stennett.
Colnbrook, Bucks.....	John Lloyd.
Fairford, Gloucestershire	Daniel Williams.
Faringdon, Berks	Joseph Stennett.
Kingston, Lisle, ditto	Thomas Smith.
Lingfield, Surry	— Powell.
Oakingham, Berks	John Wills.
Oxford	James Hinton.
Stratton, Wilts	Thomas Smith.
Clapham, Surry	John Ovington.
Unicorn Yard, Southwark ...	Thomas Hutchings.”

1798.]

Churches endowed by the late Abraham Atkins.

“Fourteen of these societies were included in the first trust-deed, which was duly enrolled in chancery, and by which Mr. Atkins, several years before his death, alienated a considerable estate, lying partly in the parish of Bampton, Oxon, and partly in the parish of Stratfield-Say, Hants. To this bounty, Mr. Atkins added by will, two thousand pounds East India stock, the interest to be divided between the above sixteen congregations, Unicorn Yard and Clapham churches being then added to the first fourteen. Clapham has also other endowments annexed to it by Mr. Atkins’s benevolence, besides a distinct legacy of thirty guineas per annum in his will.

“There is a distinct enrolment in chancery, vesting certain ground-rents in the trustees for the benefit of the interest at Unicorn Yard, and towards the support of the Horsleydown charity School, Southwark; and a school at Kingston-Lisle, Berks.

“The first trustees were—The Rev. Robert Robinson, Cambridge; Rev. Thomas Dunscombe, Coate; Rev. Daniel Turner, Abingdon; Rev. William Wilkins, Bourton; Joseph Tomkins, Esq. Abingdon; Benjamin Tomkins, Esq. ditto; William Tomkins, sen. Esq. ditto; William Tomkins, jun. Esq. ditto.

“Upon vacancies happening, the following gentlemen have been chosen—Joseph Tomkins, Esq. Abingdon; John Tomkins, Esq. ditto; Edward Sheppard, Esq. London.”

It is understood, that the trustees of this property have conducted themselves towards the churches interested, with great liberality of sentiment, as well as inflexible integrity. Some doubts at present are entertained, the writer has been informed, whether a considerable part of the property will not be lost.

The writer regrets, that owing to various circumstances, he has been obliged to omit several churches in London and its vicinity; a list of which at present he can only give:—

Mitchell Street, Old Street Road, Mr. Thomas Powell; Spencer Place, Goswell Street, Mr. John Peacock; Eldon Street, Moorfields, Welch Baptists, Mr. Rowland, and Sabbatarians, Mr. J. B. Shenstone; Peckham, Mr. Thomas Powell, jun.; Westminster, Mr. C. Woollacott; Lambeth, Mr. Jeffery; Stoke Newington, Mr. Mileham; Great Alie Street, Mr. W. Wilks; Shouldam Street, Mr. George; Hill Street, near the Regent’s Park, Mr. Foreman; Clement’s Lane, Mr. House; Commercial Road, General Baptists, Mr. Wallis; Hampstead, Mr. Castledine.

BOOK V.

HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY BAPTIST CHURCHES.

[Continued from Page 316.]

CHURCH IN MILL LANE, BEDFORD.

THE ministers who succeeded the justly celebrated John Bunyan, were all of them Pædobaptists. One of them, Mr. Joshua Symonds, was ordained August 4, 1767, and after twenty-five years became a Baptist, and still continued as pastor of the church until his death.

Mr. Symonds, on February 9, 1772, publicly avowed his change of sentiment on the subject of baptism, in a discourse founded upon Romans xiv. 23. He was baptized by the late Mr. Sutcliff, of Olney. He says,—“The painful exercises of my mind led me earnestly to implore the Divine assistance upon this momentous occasion. I frequently spread the affair before the Lord, and begged that I might be under the conduct and direction, the government and influence, of the Holy Spirit. I have very frequently and ardently intreated the God of all grace to guide and lead my mind according to his holy word and will. I also made it matter of constant prayer and supplication, that the searcher of all hearts would preserve me from temptation, error, and delusion on every side. I often said, ‘From prejudice and bigotry, from pride and self-sufficiency, from self-conceit and self-deceit, from sinister views and carnal motives, good Lord deliver me.’ ”

1806.]

Mr. Joshua Symonds.

Mr. Symonds died in the year 1788. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. John (afterwards Dr.) Ryland, then of Northampton, from Coloss. i. 27, 28; and an address was delivered at the grave by Mr. John Sutcliff, of Olney. From this publication I select the following account:—

“The Rev. Joshua Symonds was born at Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, on January 23, 1739. His father was an apothecary; a man eminent for godliness, as his ancestors had been for time immemorial. He remained chiefly at home for the first ten or eleven years of his life, and then went to school at Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, for between two and three years. Afterwards he resided in different families in Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire, for about seven years, in order to cultivate an acquaintance with the farming business, for which line of life he was then intended. Probably when about sixteen, he was brought to a just knowledge of divine and spiritual things. From this time he appears in general to have lived in an eminent degree under their influence. When about eighteen, he joined the Independent church at Bromsgrove, in Worcestershire, under the Rev. Mr. Jenkins. His eminent piety, and promising abilities, being noticed by ministers and friends, he was encouraged to think of the work of the ministry. It was first moved to him by the Rev. Mr. Wylde, an eminent Independent minister in Carr’s Lane, Birmingham. After much serious deliberation, consulting of friends, and seeking to God by prayer, he inclined to the proposal, and went to the academy under Dr. Conder, &c. at Mile-end, near London, in the beginning of September, 1760. Being thus settled here, he removed his communion to the Independent church at Stepney, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Samuel Brewer. Towards the close of his academical studies, he was invited to spend a few sabbaths with the destitute people at Bedford. He came down in March, 1766. After spending ten Lord’s days with them, he was requested to stay one year on probation. Having seriously weighed the affair, he came among them in July. In March, 1767, they gave him a call to settle among them as their pastor. This he accepted in the month of May, and on the 4th of August was ordained.

“Soon afterwards he married Miss Elizabeth Kingsley, the

Mr. Joshua Symonds.

[1816.]

daughter of Mr. Kingsley, a reputable citizen of London. By her he had twelve children. Mrs. Symonds, with two sons and six daughters, are still living. In this connection he was exceedingly happy.

“When he was first settled at Bedford (as before mentioned) he was a Pædobaptist, and so continued for several years. At length some scruples seizing his mind, relative to infant baptism, he examined the matter more attentively. The result was, a change of sentiment. Agreeable, however, to the original constitution of the church, he remained in the pastoral office.

Some time afterwards, a number of persons withdrew from their connection with the church and congregation under Mr. Symonds, and formed a new society. They erected a commodious place of worship in the same street, and are a respectable and thriving body under their worthy minister and pastor, the Rev. Thomas Smith, a Pædobaptist. This division has evidently been for the advantage of the dissenting interest, and, we hope, the promotion of the cause of truth and religion. The town and neighbourhood will well admit of two societies. May peace prevail in and between both, and prosperity attend each.*

“Mr. Symonds was afflicted with a variety of bodily disorders for some years before his death. At length a growing asthma began to interrupt him occasionally in his ministerial work. This, after a time, was accompanied with a dropsy. He was laid aside from preaching entirely for several months before his dissolution. His afflictions were sometimes very heavy, but his inward consolations abounded. That gospel which he had preached to others, was the support of his soul, and the source of his joy. He knew whom he had believed, and rejoiced in the prospect, and longed for the arrival of that day, when he should be with, and like to, Jesus. Sometimes he expressed a fear, lest his

* It is remarkable, that at a general church-meeting held on April 3, 1788, an account being taken of the number of members, it was found precisely the same as when Mr. Symonds first settled with them; viz. one hundred and twenty-seven. There had been one hundred and twenty-two added since his coming, and one hundred and twenty-two removed by death or other ways. A few more were added before Mr. Symonds's death.

1788.]

Mr. Joshua Symonds.

afflictions should be long, and earnestly prayed for patience until the coming of Christ. In his death, as well as in his life, he was a witness for God; a witness to the importance, the supports, the comforts of religion. Through his affliction he had the full possession of his reasoning powers. At length the time of his departure arrived, and he entered into the joy of his Lord on sabbath day, Nov. 23, 1788, a little after ten o'clock in the morning."

A note in Dr. Ryland's sermon, as it is the only account of his last days, and seems to exhibit his excellent character, I transcribe:—

"In a letter," says Dr. Ryland, "which I received from him near three months before his death, dated Sept. 1st, he says—
'Not only am I troubled with shortness of breath, but frequent pains in different parts of my stomach and viscera. I often seem every week near my dissolution, and yet revive as often: this was the case last night compared with this day. The Lord is immensely kind to the vilest of the vile; he takes delight in bestowing the choicest blessings upon an object the most base and unworthy. My heavenly Father indulges me lately with a steady constant peace, and sometimes, when I think I am just going to my blessed Redeemer, with unutterable joy and transport: which I apprehend would be more the case, could I enjoy my heart's desire without painful and exquisite distress for some I am to leave behind. Both sides are in danger of being selfish; it is therefore a great comfort that our all-wise, all-sufficient Friend is to decide the point. I should be willing to stay longer if my dear Lord and Master chose to make me further useful, and I long to be resigned to live, though afflicted and useless: the Lord make me submissive to his good pleasure as to life or death, health or sickness, pain or ease, service or silence. But O the peace of God the Father, the love of a dear Immanuel, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, all surpass knowledge.—I frequently and greatly wonder that I am not filled with horror and despair; but my confidence is supported by the general strain of the gospel, and by several particular texts of scripture. I am also encouraged to persist in this confidence from Heb. iii. 6, 14. chap. x. 35. Yet I look upon an unscriptural confidence as

Church at Luton.

[1726.]

most awful and tremendous. Job xvii. 14. Jer viii. 5.—Several different lines and stanzas of Watts's hymns occur to my mind at times, and refresh and revive me. I never feel the least wish to retract any sentiment I preach, being persuaded that what I publish is in the main the very truth of God, and founded upon his holy Word.'—When I went over to see him, Sept. 25, he appeared in the same desirable frame of mind, which generally continued to the last, though sometimes for a short season interrupted by conflicts with the adversary of our souls.—A few days before his death he underwent scarifications of his legs and other lancements with great patience; and under the most painful of these operations, having desired the surgeon to pause a minute, he observed, that his blessed Lord was lanced, and underwent worse sufferings than these, but not for his own sins.—His departure at last, though long expected, was sudden and almost instantaneous."

CHURCH AT LUTON.

MR. THOMAS MARSOM, the founder of this church, who died in the year 1726, was succeeded by his son, Mr. Samuel Marsom, and he by a son of his own name. This gentleman was eminent both as a minister and a conveyancer, and was a man of wealth. Dr. Samuel Stennett of London married his daughter. Though distinguished by integrity in his profession as a conveyancer he did not escape the tongue of slander: he possessed, however, sufficient spirit to compel the libeller to confess his fault publicly, which he did in the Northampton Mercury. The note below is inserted from a manuscript before me, because it so fully vindicates the character of Mr. Marsom. *

* "From the Northampton Mercury of 22nd Nov. 1747; at that time sold at twopence each number, the duty being only a halfpenny each:—

1801.]

Mr. Thomas Pilley.

The Rev. Thomas Pilley accepted the invitation of this church December 22, 1768, and was ordained pastor July 26, 1769.

He was born of pious parents, in the county of Essex, Nov. 14, 1734, was baptized by the Rev. Samuel Burford, pastor of the church in Prescot Street, London, June 28, 1753, and became a member of that church. After exercising his gifts he was called to the ministry by them, September 21, 1767. He laboured at Luton upwards of thirty years, till his death, April 18, 1801, aged sixty-seven years. He was buried in the burying ground adjoining the meeting-house, April 23. Mr. Hunt, then of Ridgemount, spoke at the interment, and on Lord's day, the twenty-sixth, Mr. Geard, of Hitchin, preached his funeral sermon from Phil. i. 23, "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." It was to the honour of Mr. Pilley that he lived respected and died lamented, and to the credit of his people that they knew how to value him in his life, and that they showed every respect to him in his last illness, and to his memory after his death.

"Whereas I Daniel Knight, of Luton, in the county of Bedford, have (by the instigation of another person) spread reports, tending greatly to the prejudice of Mr. Samuel Marsom, of Luton aforesaid, concerning the manner of his drawing the conveyance and reconveyance made between me and Mr. Edward Fossey, of the cottage or tenement in Luton, wherein I dwell, and garden thereto belonging: Now I the said Daniel Knight freely declare, that the said conveyances were faithfully drawn, pursuant to agreement; that I perfectly understood the same, before they were executed, and then was, and now am, fully satisfied therewith; and frankly own and acknowledge that the reports I have made to the contrary thereof, are false, malicious, and scandalous. I, the said Daniel Knight, do therefore in this manner beg pardon of the said Mr. Marsom for this offence, and promise I will never in the like manner offend again; and do also agree that this my declaration and acknowledgment be forthwith published in the Northampton Mercury, for the vindication of Mr. Marsom's character herein. Witness my hand this twelfth day of October, 1747.

" DANIEL KNIGHT.

" Witnesses hereto,

" WILLIAM GOLDSMITH, }
JAMES GUTTERIDGE." }

Church at Abingdon.

[1700.]

He had an extensive knowledge of the things of God, being well acquainted with the bible, and possessing a peculiar talent for unfolding its glorious truths. He was a man of strict fidelity, very benevolent to the poor, a labourer and not a loiterer in God's vineyard, and an exceedingly useful minister. A Mr. Thomas Blundel succeeded him, who was called to the ministry by the church of Kettering. His life was inconsistent, and his end without honour. The Rev. Ebenezer Daniel is the present pastor. The meeting-house has been rebuilt since the time of Mr. Pilley, and is large and commodious.

BERKSHIRE.

CHURCH AT ABINGDON.

THE present meeting-house was built in the year 1700. There had been a place of worship on the same site before, the garden and minister's house having been purchased prior to 1670; and even before this, in 1667, a legacy of 50*l.* was *left for the use of the minister of this church*, the interest of which was regularly paid till 1777, and doubtless is still paid. The church, in its early period, suffered great persecutions. After the Revolution in 1688, Mr. John Tomkins was the pastor, and Mr. Keen the assistant. They were cotemporary, and were men of solid judgment and great piety, who had suffered in the cause of Christ and his truth. The former of these worthy men was the great grandfather of the race of gentlemen of that name in Abingdon, who have from that time been, and are still, ornaments of the church and of the denomination.

Mr. William Fuller was, it is said, settled here about 1705, and was pastor upwards of forty years; he died Nov. 24, 1745, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

1776.]

Mr. Daniel Turner.

Rev. Daniel Turner, A. M. This worthy minister had received an education for the ministry from the Rev. Dr. James, of Hemel Hempstead. He settled first at Reading, but in September, 1748, he removed to Abingdon, and there continued till his death.

The state of the church, as it was in 1776, is thus described:—
“This society is in tolerably flourishing circumstances: the auditory is between two and three hundred, and has continued much the same these thirty years past. When Mr. Turner first came to Abingdon the church consisted of between sixty and seventy members, but is now reduced to about forty; and though most years some have been added, yet not a proportionate number: the audience has of late been increasing.”

Mr. Turner was very intimate with Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge. A short letter sent to him in 1781 by the latter, who generally addressed him “Honoured father,” will show he was desirous of promoting literature in the denomination. “I have been thinking,” says Mr. Robinson, “of your hints of an endowed college, and wish you could think of any way to effect it. We want a college for law and physic, and for gentlemen of independent fortunes. Our dissenting interest has suffered much from this deficiency by the sons of such gentlemen being sent to our universities, who of course left us to go over to the church. This was the case of Lord Barrington and several families in this neighbourhood. Mr. Atkins has a house near Wantage that would do: he might, if he would, endow it with a thousand a year: if you have opportunity, feel his pulse about the matter as fully as you can.” *

* Mr. Robinson’s biographer says, “Atkins, mentioned in this letter, was a man of extensive fortune, who lived at Clapham in Surrey. His country residence was Kingston Lisle, Berkshire. He is now dead (1796); but was well known for his liberality while living, and will be long remembered with gratitude, though now no more. Robinson calls him “a perfect gentleman, an excellent scholar, and a good man.”

The father of Mr. Atkins was a deacon of the church in Unicorn Yard, and one of those members of Mr. Keach’s church, who objected to the settlement of Dr. Gill. Mr. Atkins was a member of the same church:

Mr. Daniel Turner.

[1798.]

Mr. Turner was the author of several works. In the year 1789, or 1790, he published in two volumes "Essays on Various Subjects, viz. On the Origin of our Idea of God: On the Mosaic Account of the Creation of the Solar System: On the Nature and Necessity of Religion: On the Nature, Criteria, and Use of Miracles: On a Separate State: On a Double Sense of some of the Prophetic Scriptures." He published an exhortation delivered at the close of a sermon preached December 9, 1792, entitled, "An Exhortation to Peace, Loyalty, and the Support of Government." The next year he published, "Letters, Religious and Moral, addressed to a Young Gentleman in India, and others: Designed to Inspire the Mind of Youth with the Love of Piety and Virtue." 2. "Free Thoughts on the Spirit of Free Inquiry in Religion; with Cautions against the abuse of it, and Persuasions to Candour, Toleration, and Peace, amongst Christians of all Denominations." In 1795 he published a sermon occasioned by the death of Dr. Samuel Stennett, entitled "The Gracious Presence of God the Chief Joy of his People." In this year also "The Monitor; or a Friendly Address to the People of Great Britain, on the most Effectual Means of Deliverance from our National Calamities, particularly the present War, and of obtaining a Lasting and Honourable Peace. By Theophilus Senex." In 1798 Two Letters addressed to a Deistical Friend were published anonymously, entitled "Common Sense; or the Plain Man's Answer to the Question, Whether Christianity be a Religion worthy of our Choice in this 'Age of Reason.'"

The Rev. John Evans became an assistant to Mr. Turner, and succeeded him in the pastoral office. The present pastor is Mr. John Kershaw.

at his death he left his property to endow a considerable number of Baptist churches, on one condition only, that if Pædobaptists applied for communion they should not be refused. The Baptist church at Clapham will receive a very large amount of property, which belonged to this gentleman."—See Rippon's Register, vol. iii. p. 117.

1752.]

Church at Reading.

CHURCH AT WANTAGE.

THE meeting-house is very old, and the church and congregation has been for many years in a declining state. Mr. Samuel Bowen, who had been pastor of the church at Shortwood, was here from 1758 till his death in 1764. Since which Mr. Enoch Francis; Mr. John West, now of Dublin; Mr. Pryce, now of Coate; and Mr. James Jackson, late of Ashford, have filled the pastoral office. The present pastor is Mr. Glanville. There are some considerable endowments.

CHURCH AT READING.

THE meeting-house in Hosier's Lane, Reading, was opened for worship in 1752. That excellent poet, Mr. Daniel Turner, had been their pastor from 1741 to 1748. Mr. Thomas Whitewood, from Portsea, settled with them in 1749, and continued till 1766, when he left them. Mr. Thomas Davis succeeded him in 1767, and remained pastor of the church till his death, in 1796. Mr. John Holloway (now of Cotton-end, near Bedford) was ordained pastor in 1798, and continued till 1811. Mr. John Dyer, now secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, was settled as pastor in 1814, and continued about four years. The church was destitute two years, when the present pastor, Mr. J. H. Hinton, removed from Haverfordwest, and settled with them.

Mr. Thomas Davis, mentioned above, was a distinguished minister of the denomination. The following account was given of him in Dr. Rippon's Register for 1796:—"He was born at Newport, in the Isle of Wight. His mother was baptized in that town by the Rev. Mr. Mercer, in the year 1725. Thomas, having learnt a trade, soon wandered from under the wing of an affectionate mother, whose maternal advice and care were considered by him as a reflection on his ability to take care of

Mr. Thomas Davis.

[1796.]

himself: but she ceased not to pray for him night and day; and what particularly encouraged her to it was the frequent, powerful, and abiding impression made on her mind by the history of Saul's conversion, of whom it was at length said, 'Behold he prayeth.' Strolling from place to place, at length he came to Woolwich, in Kent, about nine miles from London. Here, according to his usual character, he was a ringleader in all kinds of wickedness. One new year's day in the evening, with some of his companions, he went to the Baptist meeting-house in that town: the example of his pious mother had made such impression on his mind, that he could not always despise nor even trifle with sacred things. However, the former part of that evening witnessed his indecent behaviour in the time of singing and prayer. The house was crowded, and he stood in the aisle waiting to hear what the babbler had to say. At length that laborious, indefatigable, and useful servant of God, the Rev. Robert M'Gregor, who has been forty years pastor at Woolwich, named his text. The remarkable words were, Luke xiii. 7, 'Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Well might the apostle say,

The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; for the text had not been twice read before his loins were loosed, his knees smote each other, and a sudden trembling seized him. The first wish of his heart was, that the ground might open and swallow him up. It seemed to him as though the preacher and the whole congregation knew that he was this cumberer of the ground. However, before the minister closed his discourse, he slightly touched on the vine-dresser's prayer, contained in the two following verses, 'Lord! let it alone this year also,' &c. and this was in some measure a support to his sinking and overwhelmed mind. He instantly changed his company, and his conduct became altered. Believing in Christ Jesus, old things passed away, except the painful recollection of them, and all things became new. He now hungered and thirsted after Christ, the bread of life, and that river the streams whereof make glad the city of God. He not only was constant in his attendance

1796.]

Mr. Thomas Davis.

on worship of a Lord's-day, but would steal in among the pious people on week-day evenings at their prayer meetings. After a while he was encouraged to pray with these friends, and so full was his heart of sorrow and joy, that he filled up near an hour and a half, the first time he engaged in this service. His gifts soon appeared to be above mediocrity. After speaking several times before the church, and his unblemished walk, genuine piety, and promising talents being conspicuous, they unanimously sent him forth to preach that faith he had before attempted to destroy. Mr. Davis preached a few Lord's-days at the late Mr. Dowers's meeting in Goodman's-fields; the house began to fill, but from thence he was speedily and providentially called to the Baptist church at Reading, Berks.

“When Mr. Davis went to Reading there was very little gospel preaching in that populous town. He succeeded Mr. Whitewood, and the church consisted of about thirty or thirty-five members, and very few hearers attended. The house soon was so crowded as to oblige them to build a front gallery, and soon after two side galleries. On lecture-evenings the meeting-house and yard were so crowded, that the attendance of peace-officers was now and then necessary. He would stand and weep over poor perishing sinners till at times he could not proceed; and a very respectable minister, who considers Mr. Davis as his spiritual father, has said, ‘He is confident that Mr. Davis’s greatest success was when he preached the gospel as a general address.’ The number of young persons awakened in this part of his ministry was astonishing.

“As a pastor, he certainly ruled and fed the flock at the same time; he was also a brother, husband, and father, not only to his own family, but to the whole church and congregation. When visiting his friends in London, where he was much followed, he sent the church very affectionate epistles, longing to see them again, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, to the end they might be established and comforted together with him.

“While Mr. Davis was pastor, the church branched out into other societies; one at Oakingham, another at Goring, and another at Staines; and several persons were sent into the work of the ministry.

Mr. Thomas Davis.

[1796.]

“For many years he had been subject to fits.* He frequently fell down in the pulpit, sometimes sensible, but speechless: recovering from one in which he thought he was dying, as soon as he could speak, he said, in accents which discovered how deeply he felt for his dear wife and children, ‘Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me.’ O that all of them may be acquainted, savingly acquainted, with the God of the dear deceased!

“In discipline, as well as doctrine, Mr. Davis aimed to follow the New Testament. When the Rev. Mr. Talbot died, and the gospel ceased to be preached at Reading in the church of England, Mr. Davis was urged to alter the constitution of his church from that of a strict Baptist to free communion. A gentlemen of this sentiment said, ‘He may live in splendour if he will comply.’ But so immovable was he, that notwithstanding he came from a church of that complexion, and was pressed to it on every hand, yet he would not consent to it, as he could not see it countenanced in any part of the sacred scripture.

“So effectually was he taught by the good Spirit of God, that he firmly believed salvation was all of grace, electing, redeeming, and sanctifying grace; and hence he was wont to say, ‘If ever I have a tomb-stone, the motto I should wish for on it is,

‘A SINNER SAVED BY SOVEREIGN GRACE.’

“For more than two years before his death, he was greatly afflicted with the stone and gravel; and said in a letter of June 16, 1796, ‘I have brought away five stones, what are behind I know not. I have just had a fit of the gout also, but am somewhat better. I hope I can say, through all, The cup

* In a letter written to a constant correspondent, 1778, he says, “I have had a disorder in my bowels for years, which seizes me suddenly, frequently takes away my senses, and throws me into fits—sometimes fainting, and sometimes struggling ones. I expect they will take me off on a sudden, when my work is done. I had a smart shock of this nature about three weeks ago, which made my tabernacle totter. I have too great a flow of spirits for my frame. But it is all well, especially as I have had great troubles in my family; but, after long afflictions, I can send you no good news regarding the conversion of my children.”

1796.]

Mr. Thomas Davis.

which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" These dispensations of late considerably impeded his exertions; but he held on as a champion in the good cause, beyond the expectations of most of his friends.* His illness at last, day and night, was so excruciating, that 'it is impossible to give a faint idea of it in writing.' In one of the paroxysms he clasped the curtains of his bed, crying out, 'O, Dr. Watts! what could you mean when you said,

Light are the pains that nature brings;
How short our sorrows are !'

—and yet the agonizing man was certain they are so,

‘ When with eternal, future things,
The present we compare.’

“ Hence, in the midst of all, he generally possessed great serenity in his soul, even the peace which passeth all understanding. And comfortably resting upon the truths he had preached among his dear friends, twenty-nine years and six months, he died in the Lord, at half past ten o'clock in the evening, on the 27th of December, 1796, in the year of his age; to the inexpressible grief not only of a pious, peaceful, and inoffensive widow, with her children, but also of his much-loved charge—a people who, it is said, are uncommonly blessed with praying members, and to whose honour it may be announced, That they would not have changed their pastor for any man under heaven.”

His funeral sermon was preached at Reading by the Rev. John Dyer, of Devizes, from a text chosen by the deceased minister, 1 Tim. i. 15. “ This is a faithful saying,” &c. Also by Dr. Rippon at his meeting-house in Carter-lane, London.

This church has sent, at different times, several of its members into the ministry; among the most respectable may be named Mr. Philip Davis, now at Whitchurch, and Mr. James Millard, now at Lymington.

* He was laid by from his delightful work only two Lord's-days. The last time he was in the pulpit he was unable to finish his sermon.

CHURCH AT NEWBURY.

IT is said the church at Newbury has existed from about the year 1640. It may be seen in Fox's Book of Martyrs that a congregation of Lollards existed there upwards of three hundred years ago, who were called "known men," or "just-fast-men." One of the pastors suffered martyrdom in the fire at Newbury at that period.

The following brief sketch of the Baptist church is from a circular letter, prepared in 1826, by the Rev. J. H. Hinton, of Reading :—" Its first pastor was Mr. James, who must have been very young at the commencement of his labours, as he continued them upwards of sixty years. He was succeeded in or near 1716 by Mr. Jefferies, the father of Dr. Jefferies, whose daughter was the first wife of Dr. Caleb Evans, of Bristol. He had been ordained as assistant, at Taunton, Somerset, to which place he had engaged to return on the death of his principal. He was pastor five years, very much beloved, and departed amidst the blessings of his people. About 1724 a minister was settled over them whose name is not recorded, but his sentiments tended to arminianism and arianism. In 1730 Mr. Brittern was pastor at Newbury, but after a short stay he removed to Whitchurch. Mr. Taylor succeeded, and after some years removed to London, where he joined the presbyterians. The next pastor was Mr. Edward Harrison, who after several years, in consequence of a misunderstanding, accepted an invitation to Broadmead, Bristol, as assistant to Mr. Bernard Foskett ; during which period the place was kept open by gifted members of the church. Mr. Harrison subsequently returned, but his moral character proving bad, after much contention, he was dismissed. Mr. Wilkins, from Warminster, was then invited, and remained with the church some years as minister, Mr. Beyley of Wantage coming over occasionally to administer the ordinances. In the year 1748 Mr. Francis Lewis was chosen pastor, and with the exception of a temporary schism in 1779, continued so till his death, in 1780. On the 20th of September in the same year, Mr. James Bicheno entered on the office, which also he resigned in 1807. He

1820.]

Church at Newbury.

subsequently took the charge of the church at Coate, Oxon; but, advancing in years, he returned to Newbury, where he continued to manifest the most cordial attachment to the cause. In 1805 he introduced to the pulpit Mr. John Perry, from Malmesbury, Wilts, who was ordained on Mr. Bicheno's resignation in 1807. He was removed by death in 1812, and was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Welsh, the present pastor.

"The labours of Mr. James, which it will be remembered were in troublous times, were much blessed, and the church enjoyed great harmony. They first met in the house of Mr. Jabez Hill, a grocer, in Northbrook Street, the house in which Dr. Friend lived for many years, and which is now inhabited by Mr. D. Atlec. After the revolution of 1688 they availed themselves of their privileges, and erected a place of worship in North Croft Lane, in 1702, the members being then about fifty. Mr. Jefferies was both popular and beloved. During the five years of his ministry fifty persons were baptized, and he left the church in a very promising state. From his departure, however, is to be dated the commencement of its decline, as the preaching of his successor, partaking of the character of the day, was tinctured with arianism, and hastened the falling off of many of the most substantial families to arian doctrines, and the presbyterian body. During the following years the church continued to decay, and under the ministry of Mr. Lewis were extremely low. Nor under that of Mr. Bicheno did they revive. When Mr. Perry commenced his labours the members were very few, and from some of them it was necessary to withdraw. The word however was blessed, and several persons brought into the church whose piety was decided, and who strengthened his hands by their humility, tenderness, and prayers. A man of holiness, he promoted salutary discipline, and was zealous in dispensing the word of reconciliation; and these excellencies greatly contributed to the subsequent prosperity of the church. During his ministry eight were added by baptism, and one by letter; an accession not large, but of great worth and promise. The church, though small, was now united in sentiment and affection, walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Under Mr. Welsh's care they have been favoured with a continued increase."

CHURCH AT WOKINGHAM.

THE church at Wokingham appears to have grown out of that at Reading, chiefly from the labours of Mr. Thomas Davis. The original meeting-house was erected in 1773, and a church, consisting of seventeen members dismissed from that at Reading, was constituted in 1778. Mr. George Goodrick then became their pastor, but resigned his office in the following year, from which, till 1781, the people were supplied almost entirely by Mr. William Burnham, residing at Maidenhead, but a member of the church at Reading, by which he had been called to the ministry. Mr. Thomas Stiles, from Chatham, was ordained in 1782, but some painful circumstances led to his resignation in 1785, when the pulpit was frequently supplied by Mr. John Paul Porter, now of Bath, but then residing at Frimley. In 1790 Mr. Thomas Burgwin, now of Blackwater, commenced preaching at Wokingham, and in the following year was ordained, but resigned his charge in 1794; after which (in July 1795) Mr. John Wills, from Witney, Oxon. became pastor, and so continued till the year 1804. After his retirement the church was supplied for two or three years by the conjoint labours of Messrs. Chapman, Millard, and Davies, members at Reading: this effort however by degrees devolved on Mr. Davies only, who finally accepted the pastoral charge in 1807, and retained it till his removal to Whitchurch, Hants, in 1818. In the year following the church was again settled under Mr. John Coles, of Poplar, their present pastor.

Much prosperity does not seem to have attended the early years of this church. The ministry of Mr. Stiles, from 1782 to 1785, during which twenty-six persons were added, was the most favoured. In the following five years, while kindly aided by Mr. Porter, from Frimley, service was often conducted by reading and prayer without a minister. The nine years of Mr. Wills's ministry, from 1795 to 1804, are marked by the addition of only eight persons. From this period however may be dated a revival, under the voluntary and zealous efforts of the brethren from

1819.]

Church at Datchet.

Reading, and the affectionate pastorate of Mr. Davies, during the eleven years of which fifty-seven persons were added to the church. In the seven years which have elapsed since Mr. Coles's settlement, there has been a further gratifying increase.

The meeting-house has been nearly rebuilt within a short period, and is now a very commodious place of worship.

CHURCH AT DATCHET.

THE foundation of this church was laid by the liberality of Mr. Fleetwood Marsh, a member of the church at Colnbrook, but who resided at Datchet.* He fitted up the present meeting-house, then a part of his own property, and conveyed it in trust for the worship of God. The place was supplied by ministers of different denominations. The first, Mr. Searl, was a Baptist, and the next a Pædobaptist, Mr. Burgis, who preached also at Windsor, the congregation at both places being nearly the same. Mr. James Fryer, of the same connexion, succeeded, and his labours were very acceptable and much blessed, till terminated by death. From this period the place was dependent on various supplies, of some of whom the recollection is deeply painful, till 1805, when Mr. John Young, from Staines, occupied the pulpit for two years, at the expiration of which there was formed a Baptist church, over which he was ordained. The church consisted of only five members, but was much increased under Mr. Young. He resigned his charge in 1815, after which, for about eighteen months, supplies were brought from London. The church then had recourse to the gifted brethren within their own body, and were thus led to the choice of their present pastor, Mr. William Bailey, who was ordained in 1819. The difficulties here are great, and the prospects not of the most animating kind.

* This gentleman removed to America some years since. He has died lately, and left for the use of the present and succeeding pastors of the churches at Colnbrook and Datchet, each five thousand dollars!

CHURCH AT WALLINGFORD.

FROM the before mentioned Circular Letter the following is an extract:—"The Baptist church at Wallingford originated in the zeal and liberality of Mr. Robert Lovegrove, a solicitor, who commenced preaching at first in his own house, where many persons heard him with much pleasure, and encouraged him to persevere. This induced him to erect a place of worship, which he did in his own garden, and almost entirely at his own expense. It was opened for public worship, and Mr. Lovegrove was himself baptized, by Mr. Davis, of Reading, May 20, 1794. On the 27th of July Mr. Davis baptized six other persons, and of these seven the church was formed the same day. Mr. Lovegrove continued to labour till his last illness and death in 1813, and was succeeded by Mr. Dobney, in the following year. He held his office till 1818, when the church were supplied by Mr. Tyso, from Watchett, under whom they were finally settled in 1819.

"Mr. Lovegrove's pastorate was a time of great activity and considerable increase. Besides his own labours in Wallingford, he supported an assistant minister for itinerating in the neighbourhood, a post which has been successively occupied by Mr. Charles Holmes, from Reading, afterwards of Wantage; Mr. John Holloway, from Wantage, and afterwards of Reading; Mr. Seymour; Mr. Joseph Ivimey, now of Eagle Street, London; Mr. Melony, and Mr. Cooper. He also purchased two cottages for preaching at Roke, a village about three miles north-east of Wallingford. A chapel was built at Cholsey, a large village two miles south of the town, and another at Slade-end by Mr. Wells, one of the original members of the church, who himself became a preacher. In the nineteen years of Mr. Lovegrove's pastorate two hundred persons were added to the church. During the early part of Mr. Tyso's ministry the meeting-house was considerably enlarged."

1714.]

Church at Chesham.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CHURCH AT CHESHAM.

THIS church was formed in 1714 (if not before), by several Baptists who resided in the town uniting in fellowship. Soon after, nine persons were added to their number by a letter of dismission from Hemel Hempstead. For several years they worshipped in a private house.

The meeting-house was erected in 1719; it was then very small, but is now forty-eight feet by thirty-three. It is freehold, and is in the hands of trustees.

Mr. Thomas Aldridge appears to have been the first pastor of the church. There is no account of the time of his ordination, but he died about July, 1715. Mr. Thomas Norris (from London) was ordained December 17, in the same year.

The following is a copy of his dismission:—

“ The church of Christ meeting near Cripplegate, London, to the church at Chesham, sendeth greeting in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

“ Holy and beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“ We received your epistle, wherein you desire our Brother Thomas Norris might be dismissed from us, and recommended unto you. Although he is a useful member with us, yet in christian affection and tender regard of your condition by the removal of your honoured elder, we cannot but answer your desire and be helpers of your joy in the Lord. We therefore recommend our brother Thomas Norris unto you, praying you to receive him in the Lord as becometh saints. Nevertheless we look on him as a member with us until you have actually received him into communion. Brethren pray for us, that we may be preserved blameless in and under the present dark providence of the Lord, as we shall for you, that a spirit of wisdom may be given you in seeking God’s glory and the church’s edification, peace, and comfort, under our great King, Lord, and Lawgiver of his church, waiting his appearing and kingdom.

Church at Chenies.

[1779.]

" We remain your brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel.

" Signed by us in the name and by the appointment of the church, 6th of November, 1715.

" JOHN SKEPP, ELDER, and fifteen others."

Mr. Norris resigned the pastoral office in 1719, under unpleasant circumstances. After this Mr. Abel Landforth preached to the congregation for some years.

In the year 1712 Mr. Samuel Sleep became their pastor, and continued with them till his decease, which took place in 1774. He was succeeded by his nephew, Mr. James Sleep, whose ordination took place in December, 1775. Dr. Jones (then of Hemel Hempstead), and other neighbouring ministers, conducted the ordination service. Mr. J. Sleep entered into rest Aug. 4, 1811. His funeral sermon was delivered by the late Mr. Clement, of New-mill, and he was succeeded by the present minister, Mr. William Tomlin, who had been ordained co-pastor with Mr. S. a few weeks before his decease.

The late Mr. Hinton, of Oxford, was called to the ministry by this church, and by them was recommended to the Bristol Academy in 1784.

Mr. Richard Elliot was also called to the ministry in 1816, and is an occasional preacher in this neighbourhood.

A second Baptist church was formed in 1819.

There is a Sunday school connected with the place.

Some of the members conduct worship in two villages every Lord's-day evening, and the pastor preaches alternately on week evenings at Leyhill, Hyde, Heath, and Whelply Hill, but he is not accustomed to have any assistance in this employment.

CHURCH AT CHENIES.

THE village of Chenies, in Buckinghamshire, considering the smallness of its population and its retired situation, has been remarkably favoured by the long continued preaching of the gospel. For this invaluable privilege its inhabitants have, under

1821.]

Church at Chenies.

God, been much indebted to a family of the name of Davis; an individual of which, in three successive generations, has occupied a considerable farm in the parish, and been appointed by the duke of Bedford steward of his woodlands and other property in that part of the county.

The freehold ground on which the present meeting-house stands, with the burial ground attached thereto and a dwelling-house for the minister, were generously given, and legally vested in trustees on behalf of the church, by the late Mr. John Davis, in the year 1779.

It is uncertain when or by whom the gospel was first preached in this village, though it is well known it was preached in it by a Mr. Bennet and others, of whom no clear account is preserved. The present Particular Baptist church, according to the church book, appears to have been formed on December 20, 1760.

From the formation of the church till March 25, 1762, there is no account of the ministers; but from that period till June 24, 1764, it was supplied by a Mr. Stone, who from the circumstance of his being, on March 17, 1765, dismissed to the church under the care of Dr. Gill, must have been a member of the church at Chenies, and probably its first pastor, though there is no recognition of him in that character left on record.

Mr. Stone was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Cromwell, who, on December 2, 1764, was dismissed from a Baptist church at Limehouse, then under the pastoral care of Mr. James Larwill.

Mr. Cromwell continued pastor of the church till September 29, 1775, when he resigned his office, and was succeeded therein, on December 25, 1776, by Mr. Hugh Giles, who resigned March 25, 1788, and was succeeded in the pastoral office by Mr. Nathan Sharman, who was, on May 24, 1790, dismissed from the church at Arnsby, then under the care of the late Mr. Robert Hall. Mr. Sharman resigned on March 25, 1808, and was succeeded by Mr. William Lewis, from Bristol Academy, who was ordained pastor on June 12, 1811, and held that office till June 24, 1820. Mr. Lewis was succeeded by Mr. Ebenezer West, who was dismissed from the church at Fetter Lane, London, under the pastoral care of Mr. James Elvey. Mr. West was ordained August 14, 1821, and is still the pastor.

Church at Olney.

[1775.]

CHURCH AT OLNEY.

THE church at this place is of long standing; but all I know of its history is connected with that of its late excellent pastor, Mr. John Sutcliff. I knew him rather intimately at the last period of his life, as he frequently visited London on business connected with the Baptist Missionary Society, of which he was one of the founders. Of that Society FULLER, SUTCLIFF, and RYLAND, composed the threefold cord in England, which was not broken till the cold hand of death did it. The following account of this faithful minister of Christ was given by his most intimate friend and brother, Mr. Andrew Fuller, in a funeral sermon preached at Kettering, June 28, 1814, founded on Jude 20, 21 :—

“ Our deceased brother,” says Mr. Fuller, “ was born near Halifax, in Yorkshire, on the 9th of August, 1752, O. S. His parents were both of them pious characters, and remarkable for their strict attention to the instruction and government of their children. Of course he would be taught the good and the right way from his childhood. It does not appear, however, that he was made wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, till about the sixteenth or seventeenth year of his age. This was under the ministry of his revered friend and father, Mr. John Fawcett, pastor of the church meeting at Hepden Bridge. Of this church he became a member on May 28, 1769. Being of a serious and studious turn of mind, he appeared to his friends to possess gifts suited to the ministry, which was proposed to his consideration. The proposal met with his own wishes, and being desirous of obtaining all the instruction he could, he went, in January, 1772, to the Bristol Academy, then under the care of Messrs. Hugh and Caleb Evans. Of his conduct in this situation, it is sufficient to say, it procured the esteem of his tutors to the end of their lives.

“ In 1774, he left the academy, and, after stopping a short time at different places, in July 1775, he came to Olney. It was in the spring of the following year, when the Association was

1784.]

Mr. John Sutcliff.

held at Olney, that my acquaintance with him commenced; and, from that day to this, all that I have known of him has tended to endear him to me.

“ I cannot say when it was that he first became acquainted with the writings of President Edwards, and other New-England divines; but, having read them, he drank deeply into them: particularly, into the harmony between the law and the gospel; between the obligations of men to love God with all their hearts, and their actual enmity against him; and between the duty of ministers to call on sinners to repent and believe in Christ for salvation, and the necessity of omnipotent grace to render the call effectual. The consequence was, that, while he increased in his attachment to the Calvinistic doctrines of human depravity, and of salvation by sovereign and efficacious grace, he rejected, as unscriptural, the high, or rather hyper Calvinistic notions of the gospel, which went to set aside the obligations of sinners to every thing spiritually good, and the invitations of the gospel as being addressed to them.* Hence it was, that his preaching was disapproved by a part of his hearers, and that, in the early part of his ministry at Olney, he had to encounter a considerable portion of individual opposition. ‘ By patience, calmness, and prudent perseverance, however,’ says one of his friends, ‘ he lived to subdue prejudice; and, though his beginning was very unpropitious, from a small and not united interest, he raised it to a large body of people, and a congregation most affectionately attached to him.’

“ He had a largeness of heart that led him to expect much from the promises of God to the church in the latter days. It was on his motion, I believe, that the Association at Nottingham, in the spring of 1784, agreed to set apart an hour on the evening of the first Monday in every month, for social prayer for the success of the gospel, and to invite Christians of other denominations to unite with them in it.

* His views of the gospel may be seen by a small piece, first published in 1783, entitled, “ The First Principles of the Oracles of God, represented in a Plain and Familiar Catechism for the Use of Children.” It has gone through several Editions.

Mr. John Sutcliff.

[1791.]

“It must have been about this time that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey,* who then resided at Hackleton. Mr. C. had been baptized by Mr. (now Dr.) Ryland, at Northampton, on the 5th of October, 1783, and, after a while, joined the church at Olney, by whom he was sent into the ministry. Without reading any thing material on christian doctrine, besides the Scripture, he had formed his own system; and which, on comparison, he found to be so near to that of several of the ministers in his neighbourhood, as to lay the foundation of a close and lasting friendship between them. But to return to our deceased brother—

“In all the conversations between the years 1787 and 1792, which led on to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, and in all the meetings for fasting and prayer, both before and after it was formed, he bore a part. In 1789, he republished President Edwards’s “Humble Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God’s People, in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion.” How much this publication contributed to that tone of feeling, which, in the end, determined five or six individuals to venture, though with many fears and misgivings, on an undertaking of such magnitude, I cannot say; but it doubtless had a very considerable influence on it.

“In April, 1791, there was a double lecture at Clipstone, and both the sermons, one of which was delivered by Brother Sutcliff, bore upon the meditated mission to the heathen. His subject was Jealousy for God, from 1 Kings xix. 10. After public worship, Mr. Carey, perceiving the impression the sermons had made, entreated that something might be resolved on before we parted. Nothing, however, was done, but to request Brother Carey to revise and print his “Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.” The sermons also were printed at the request of those who heard them.†

* Now Dr. Carey, of Calcutta. Mr. S. had the honour, as he himself told me, of giving Dr. C. his first lesson in Latin!

† If he published any other sermons, or any thing else, besides his Catechism, and the Introductory Discourse at the Ordination of Mr.

1814.]

Mr. John Sutcliff.

“ From the formation of the Society in the autumn of 1792, to the day of his death, our brother's heart and hands have been in the work. On all occasions, and in every way, he was ready to assist to the utmost of his power.

“ In 1796, he married Miss Jane Johnstone, who was previously a member of his church. This connexion appears to have added much to his comfort. For eighteen years they lived together, as fellow-helpers to each other in the ways of God ; and the separation has been but short. The tomb that received his remains has since been opened to receive hers. He died on the 22d of June, and she on the 3d of September following, possessing the same good hope through grace which supported him. A sermon was preached at her interment, by Mr. Geard, of Hitchen, from Rom. v. 2. ‘ By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’

“ Mr. Sutcliff had been in a declining state of health for several years past. On the 3d of March, 1814, being on a visit at London, he was seized, about the middle of the night, with a violent pain across his breast and arms, attended with great difficulty of breathing. This was succeeded by a dropsy, which, in about three months, issued in his death.

“ Two or three times, during his affliction, I rode over to see him. The first time, he had thoughts of recovering ; but, whatever were his thoughts as to this, it seemed to make no difference as to his peace of mind. The last time I visited him was on my way to the annual meeting in London, on the 19th of June. Expecting to see his face no more, I said on taking leave, ‘ I wish you, my dear brother, an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ !’ At this he hesitated ;

Morgan, of Birmingham, it has escaped my recollection. He, however, wrote several of the Circular Letters of the Northamptonshire Association ; namely, that of 1779, On Providence ; of 1786, On the Authority and Sanctification of the Lord's-day ; of 1797, On the Divinity of the Christian Religion ; of 1800, On the Qualifications for Church Fellowship ; of 1803, On the Lord's Supper ; of 1805, On the Manner of attending to Divine Ordinances ; of 1808, On Obedience to Positive Institutions ; and of 1813, On Reading the Word of God.

Mr. John Sutcliff.

[1814.]

not as doubting his entrance into the kingdom, but as questioning whether the term *abundant* were applicable to him. ‘That,’ said he, ‘is more than I expect. I think I understand the connexion and import of those words—Add to your faith virtue—give diligence to make your calling and election sure—for *so* an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly*. I think the idea is that of a ship coming into harbour with a fair gale and a full tide. If I may but reach the heavenly shore, though it be on a board or broken piece of the ship, I shall be satisfied.’

“The following letter received from his brother, Mr. Daniel Sutcliff, who was with him the last month, will furnish a more particular account of the state of his mind than I am able to give from my own knowledge :—

“‘From the commencement of his illness, I found, by his letters,* that his mind was in general calm and peaceful. ‘All,’ said he, ‘is in the hands of a wise and gracious God. We are the Lord’s servants, and he has a right to dispose of us as he pleases, and to lay us aside at any time.’ Nearly a month before his end I went to see him—to see the chamber where the good man dies.

“‘His mind was generally calm and happy; though, as to strong consolation, he said he had it not. When something was mentioned of what he had done, in promoting the cause of Christ, he replied with emotion, ‘I look upon it all as nothing: I must enter heaven on the same footing as the converted thief, and shall be glad to take a seat by his side.’

“‘His evidences for heaven, he said, were a consciousness that he had come to Jesus; and that he felt an union of heart with him, his people, and his cause; and Jesus had said, ‘Where I am there shall my friends be.’ The heaven that he hoped for, and which he had in no small degree anticipated, was, union and communion with Christ and his people. He said, ‘The idea of being for ever separated from him, appears to me more dreadful than being plunged into non-existence, or than the greatest possible torture.’

“‘He often intimated that his views of divine things were far

* They had been used to correspond in short-hand.

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Mr. John Sutcliff.

more vivid and impressive than they had ever been before. He had a greater sense of the depravity of the human heart, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as consisting in disaffection to the character and government of God, than at any former period of his life. He had, he said, an inexpressibly greater sense of the importance of ministers having correct views of the import of the gospel-message, and of their stating and urging the same on their hearers, than he had ever had before. He was ready to think, if he could communicate his present views and feelings, they must produce a much greater effect than his preaching had ordinarily done. 'If I were able to preach again,' said he, 'I should say things which I never said before: but God has no need of me; he can raise up men to say them better than I could say them.' He would sometimes say, 'Ministers will never do much good till they begin to *pull sinners out of the fire!*'

" 'To Mrs. Sutcliff he said, 'My love, I commit you to Jesus. I can trust you with him. Our separation will not be long; and *I think I shall often be with you.*'* Read frequently the book of Psalms, and be much in prayer. I am sorry I have not spent more time in prayer.' At another time he said, 'I wish I had conversed more with the divine promises: I believe I should have found the advantage of it now.' Others of his expressions were, 'Flesh and heart fail.—All the powers of body and mind are going to pieces.—Shortly this prison of my clay must be dissolved and fall.—Why is his chariot so long a coming? I go to Jesus: let me go—depart in peace.—I have seen thy salvation.'

* It was the opinion of Mr. S. that the *spirits* of the just made perfect, in the heavenly world, as well as the *angels*, took a lively interest in whatever concerned the prosperity of the church in the world. The poet Cowper entertained the same sentiment, as is evident from his inimitable poem "On my Mother's Picture:"—

"Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed—

* * * * *

O that maternal smile! it answers, Yes."

It is a most impressive sentiment, especially to those who have recently been deprived of endeared friends; but that it is fully sustained by scripture I am not perfectly satisfied.—*Author.*

Mr. John Sutcliff.

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“ ‘ A day or two before he died, he said, ‘ If any thing be said of me, let the last word be, ‘ As I have loved you, see that ye love one another.’ ”

“ ‘ On the 22nd of June, about five in the afternoon, an alteration took place: he began to throw up blood. On perceiving this, he said, ‘ It is all over: this cannot be borne long.’ Mr. Welsh, of Newbury, being present, said, ‘ You are prepared for the issue.’ He replied, ‘ I think I am: go and pray for me.’ About half an hour before his departure, he said, ‘ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.—It is come—perhaps a few minutes more—heart and flesh fail—but God—That God is the strength of his people is a truth that I now see as I never saw it in my life.’ These were the last words he could be heard to speak.

“ ‘ Life, take thy chance; but O for such an end.’ ”

“ Mr. Daniel Sutcliff adds the following lines, as having been frequently repeated in his illness:—

“ We walk a narrow path, and rough,
And we are tired and weak;
But soon we shall have rest enough,
In those blest courts we seek.

Soon in the chariot of a cloud,
By flaming angels borne,
I shall mount up the milky way,
And back to God return.

I once have tasted Canaan’s grapes,
But now I long to go
To where my Lord his vineyard keeps,
And where the clusters grow!”

“ In saying a few things relative to his character, talents, temper, &c. I would not knowingly deviate in the smallest degree from truth. He possessed the three cardinal virtues, integrity, benevolence, and prudence, in no ordinary degree. To state this is proof sufficient, to every one who knew him. He was economical, for the sake of enabling himself to give to them that needed. The cause of God lay near his heart: he denied himself of many things, that he might contribute toward promoting it. It was from a willingness to instruct his younger

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Mr. John Sutcliff.

brethren, whose minds were toward the mission, that, at the request of the Society, he took several of them under his care : and, in all that he has done for them and others, I am persuaded he saved nothing ; but gave his time and talents for the public good.

“ I have heard him sigh under troubles ; but never remember to have seen him weep but from joy, or from sympathy. On his reading or hearing the communications from the East, containing accounts of the success of the gospel, the tears would flow freely from his eyes.

“ His talents were less splendid than useful. He had not much brilliancy of imagination, but considerable strength of mind, with a judgment greatly improved by application. It was once remarked of him, in my hearing, by a person who had known him from his youth, to this effect—‘ That man is an example of what may be accomplished by diligence and perseverance. When young he was no more than the rest of us ; but by reading and thinking he has accumulated a stock of mental riches which few of us possess.’ He would not very frequently surprise us with new or original thoughts ; but neither would he shock us with any thing devious from truth or good sense. Good Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, having heard him soon after his coming to Olney, said familiarly to me, ‘ Brother Sutcliff is a safe man : you never need fear that he will say or do an improper thing.’

“ He particularly excelled in practical judgment. When a question of this nature came before him, he would take a comprehensive view of its bearings, and form his opinion with so much precision as seldom to have occasion to change it. His thoughts on these occasions were prompt, but he was slow in uttering them. He generally took time to turn the subject over, and to digest his answer. If he saw others too hasty for coming to a decision, he would pleasantly say, ‘ Let us consult the town-clerk of Ephesus, and do nothing rashly.’ I have thought, for many years, that, among our ministers, Abraham Booth was the first counsellor, and John Sutcliff the second. His advice in conducting the mission was of great importance, and the loss of it must be seriously felt.

“ It has been said that his temper was naturally irritable, and

Mr. John Sutcliff.

[1814.]

that he with difficulty bore opposition; yet that such was the overbearing influence of religion in his heart that few were aware of it. If it were so, he must have furnished a rare example of the truth of the wise man's remark, 'Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.' Whatever might have been his natural temper, it is certain that mildness and patience and gentleness were prominent features in his character. One of the students who was with him, said he never saw him lose his temper but once, and then he immediately retired into his study. It was observed by one of his brethren in the ministry, at an Association, that the promise of Christ, that they who learned of him who was 'meek and lowly in heart should find rest unto their souls,' was more extensively fulfilled in Mr. Sutcliff than in most Christians. He was 'swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.' Thus it was that he exemplified the exhortation of the apostle, 'Giving no offence, that the ministry be not blamed.'

"There was a gentleness in his reproofs, that distinguished them. He would rather put the question for consideration, than make a direct attack upon a principle or practice. I have heard him repeat Mr. Henry's note, on Prov. xxv. 15. with approbation: 'We say, Hard words break no bones; but it seems that soft ones do.' A flint may be broken on a cushion, when no impression could be made on it upon an unyielding substance. A young man, who came to be under his care, discovering a considerable portion of self-sufficiency, he gave him a book to read on Self-knowledge.

"He is said never to have hastily formed his friendships and acquaintances, and, therefore, rarely had reason to repent of his connexions; while every year's continued intimacy drew them nearer to him; so that he seldom lost his friends: but his friends have lost him!

"He had a great thirst for reading, which not only led him to accumulate one of the best libraries in this part of the country,* but to endeavour to draw his people into a habit of reading.

* This library is left, by his will, to the Bradford Baptist Academy, only on condition of the trustees paying one hundred pounds to his relations; a sum far short of its value.

1802.]

Church at Colnbrook.

“Allowing for a partiality common to men, his judgment of characters was generally correct. Nor was it less candid than correct: he appreciated the good, and if required to speak of the evil, it was with reluctance. His eye was a faithful index to his mind; penetrating, but benignant. His character had much of the decisive, without any thing conceited or over-bearing.

“In his person he was above the ordinary stature, being nearly six feet high. In the earlier stages of life he was thin; but during the last twenty years he gathered flesh, though never so much as to feel it any inconvenience to him. His countenance was grave, but cheerful; and his company always interesting.”

CHURCH AT COLNBROOK.

THE church at this place is of long standing. Its pastors, since the recollection of the writer, have been Mr. John Lloyd, who has been mentioned as called to the ministry by the church in Eagle Street, London, and Mr. Samuel Rowles. Mr. Lloyd was for some years previously pastor of the church at Tenterden: his life, written by himself, has been reprinted, and which proves him to have been an eccentric man. Several sermons have been also printed.

Mr. Samuel Rowles was born at Wooton-under-edge, in Gloucestershire, in October, 1743. His parents died when he was very young. The first period of his life was employed in the clothing business. The following simple statement was written by himself, but at what period of his life does not appear:

“I was left an orphan at twelve years of age, a thoughtless, helpless boy. How various the scenes through which I have passed since that day! The number of my sins and of my mercies are past finding out! Young as I was, I had a heart of folly; and the reward of folly had been my portion, had the Lord given me my own way. For more than seven years I followed my own pursuit, or did what I chose, till the spring of 1763, when I was

Mr. Samuel Rowles.

[1797.]

very unexpectedly led to hear the gospel, from Mr. B. Francis, at Horsley. This I continued only a few weeks; for finding the path too strait, I left it, till April, 1764. In this absence from the word, I had a new companion, which I had never known before, a guilty conscience, and a restless mind. Fear of some sins which I forsook; but no love to God, no knowledge of Christ, nor faith in him. Some time after I returned to Shortwood, to hear a funeral sermon preached by Mr. Francis for an aunt of mine. By her request, the text was, Philippians iii. 4: 'And be found in him.' Then, for the first time, I found the word precious, and was willing to be found in him too; and was enabled to cast myself upon him as being such a Saviour as I needed. That was the time of my experimental engrafting into Christ; but to this hour I have been a stranger both to the terrors and joys which I have heard many others express. Nor have I brought forth fruit so much as thirty-fold; yet, by the grace of God, I am what I am. Christ is my hope, and shall be till I die. By Him I stand in his vineyard, barren and withered as I am;—and to him I look to perfect his own work in the day of Jesus Christ, that I may not be a cast-away at last. Clouds and darkness are round about me; but HE, the great Sun of Righteousness, *can* and *will* make darkness light, and crooked things straight, and give me peace in his name."

Mr. Rowles was introduced to the ministry in 1765, when he was about twenty-two years of age, by the excellent minister who had been the instrument of his conversion, and by whom he had been baptized and added to the church at Horsley. A most intimate connexion subsisted between him and Mr. Francis: their letters of correspondence always commenced with the tender epithets, 'Dearly beloved son,' and 'Dearly beloved father.'

Mr. Rowles was sent to the Academy at Bristol, October 17, 1765, where, for about three years, he had the advantage of the example and instruction of the Rev. Dr. Caleb Evans. On leaving the Academy, he first settled at Bampton in 1767; in 1776 he removed to Rotherhithe, near London, where he continued till 1783, when he removed to Chard, and remained there fourteen years. In 1797 he went to Canterbury, where he remained four years. For the last eighteen years of his life he

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Mr. Samuel Rowles.

resided at Colnbrook, till he "finished his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

A memorandum, written July 20, 1815, contains a curious statement of his preaching labours. "It is now fifty years since I began speaking from a text of scripture. My first text was Psalm xlv. 4: it was proposed by some of the friends at Horsley. According to my book, I have spoken 7185 times, but with what success I shall know hereafter. Mr. Morgan, of Bridgewater, Dr. Fawcett, of Yorkshire, and Mr. Martin, of London, each began two years before me."

Mr. Rowles met with many trials and difficulties both at Rotherhithe and Canterbury. When he went to Colnbrook, there were but few persons in the congregation; but during his ministry, it so much increased, that it was found necessary to enlarge the meeting-house, by erecting galleries. Many members were added to the church, and he spent his last days in peace and comfort.

The following description is from the pen of one who was intimately acquainted with him:—

"His humility was conspicuous: he esteemed others better than himself. He was sound in the faith, and remarkably exemplary in his conduct. He was favoured with much nearness to God. Meditation on his word was his daily delight; and seldom, I believe, if ever, did he go to rest without some portion of it upon his mind, which frequently engaged his thoughts in the hours of sleep. In every relation of life he shined with peculiar lustre. It may be truly said of him, that he was a walking witness of the truth which he preached. All his goings were marked with circumspection. The mutual attachment that subsisted between him and the people of his charge at Colnbrook, was exceeding strong. His memory, I believe, will be long held by them in veneration. They showed him every possible respect to the last; and their kindness is still continued to his widow. I have often heard him say, when speaking of his people, how he loved his little family; that he had spent the last eighteen years of his life with them with more peace and pleasure than any preceding part of his ministry. Even those persons in the town

Mr. Samuel Rowles.

[1820.]

who are decided enemies to the truths he preached, yet were constrained to say, 'He was a good man; that they never saw his fellow!'—He most certainly was an uniform consistent character. He was not a stranger to inward conflicts, and had a deep acquaintance with the depravity of his heart. He was often rejoicing in prospect of that rest into which, through grace, he is now entered. How often have I heard him repeat those lines:—

‘ There I shall see his face,
And never, never sin ! ’

His health had been declining for more than a twelvemonth; but he preached twice on the last Lord's-day, with comfort to himself and the people, from Isaiah lxii. 12. 'Sought out, a city not forsaken.' The more immediate cause of his death was his falling down stairs on the 24th of January, 1820. He was confined to his bed till the 28th of the same month, and about eleven o'clock in the forenoon he closed his eyes on time. During the few days of his confinement, he was visited by numerous friends, who were astonished and gratified in hearing his conversation, always extolling the riches of free and sovereign grace! He more than once said to his son, with a peculiar emphasis, 'My son, may you be separated for God.' At times he was delirious and convulsed. On the Thursday, towards evening, he requested one of the members to read the 12th chapter of John, to which he attended with great composure; and then himself engaged in prayer, in a manner which struck all present with surprise. One of the deacons being present, made this remark: 'I have often heard him pray with great acceptance, but never any thing like this: so correctly, and with such solemnity and fervour.' He passed a restless night, often inquiring what hour it was; in the morning, near eleven o'clock, he earnestly desired to be had out of bed. When seated in a chair, his countenance sensibly altered, and for a few minutes it appears the enemy was suffered to throw his last dart at him. He said, 'I hope I shall not be left in the hand of the enemy.' He then continued silent for some time; at length he broke out with a loud voice, as if in an ecstasy, 'Rest! rest! a hope full of immortality and eternal life! I shall be in glory to-morrow!' Mrs. Rowles said, 'I should be glad to go

1820.]

Church at Amersham.

with you.' His answer was, 'An end designed;' intimating that her life was spared for the good of the family. Unable to proceed, he was immediately removed to the bed, where he sat up, with the help of friends, about a quarter of an hour. He then closed his eyes without a struggle or a groan, and with such a sweet smile on his countenance, as I think will not be soon forgotten by the persons who were present. He died January 28, 1820, and on the 4th of February he was interred in the middle aisle of the meeting, at the church's request and expense, to manifest, in all the ways they could, their respect for him (no one having been buried there before). Mr. Upton, of London, spoke at the interment, and preached the funeral sermon the same evening to a crowded congregation, from 'Such were some of you, &c.' * *

The present pastor is Mr. Coleman.

CHURCH AT AMERSHAM.

THE most useful pastor of this church was Mr. Richard Morris, whose memoirs, written by Mr. B. Godwin (now a tutor of the Academy at Bradford), have passed through several editions. He was succeeded by Mr. Cooper, who is now pastor of the second church, a division having taken place a few years ago. The pastor of the original church is Mr. Statham.

* Mr. Rowles published several pamphlets, with the following titles—Appeal to the Sober Reflections of John Martin.—Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Horsley.—Revealed Religion asserted, &c. to Dr. Priestley.—Free Grace and Satisfaction defended. Answer to Mr. Isaac.—Thoughts on the Love of God: A Letter to the Western Association.—Second Letter to the Western Association.—Remarks on Calvinism refuted: Addressed to Dr. Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln.—A Letter on Baptism, at the Request of a Friend.—Thoughts on Divine Truth.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

CHURCH AT CAMBRIDGE.

THE congregation at Cambridge, now the Baptist congregation, was composed of part of the Rev. Mr. Hussey's, an independent, who removed to London in 1720. Mr. Davis, who was the rejected candidate, with a hundred of the members, hired a stable and granary in St. Andrew's parish, called Stone-Yard. Mr. Davis, having fitted it up as a place of worship, first preached in it April 16, 1721. They were afterwards formed into a church, and Mr. Davis received into their fellowship by a letter of dismission from the church at Higham Ferrars. He was ordained in June, 1721. In 1728 a division took place in this newly formed church, and Mr. Davis and forty-four members left and fitted up a place of worship at Barnwell.

The church at the Stone-Yard now consisted of eighty-eight members, and the Baptist members being a majority, proposed that in future none but persons baptized on a profession of faith should be admitted to communion, and that they should choose a Baptist minister. This being warmly opposed, the Baptists left the management of affairs to the minority, who were Pædobaptists. Mr. Sewell, the minister they chose in July, 1725, not being acceptable, the Baptist members who had not united in his choice withdrew the next year, hired a building called Miller's Barn, in St. Andrew's, and got it registered and fitted up. Mr. John Ruetham, of Wisbeach, preached in it the first time April 16, 1726.

This new Baptist church appointed meetings of prayer, and invited several ministers to supply them. They at length obtained Mr. Andrew Harper, who preached to them from July 24, 1726, to May 1727. At this time Mr. Sewell, who was aged and a man of fortune, left Cambridge. His people now proposed to choose Mr. Harper, and that his congregation should return to Stone-Yard, "on condition that the Baptists would agree to a mixed

1745.]

Church at Cambridge.

communion." To this, after warm debates, the majority agreed, and accordingly removed to Stone-Yard, November, 1727.

The future history of this mixed Baptist church is thus stated :—

"The Baptists, now in possession of Stone-Yard meeting-house, with a minister of their own denomination, could not withstand the temptation of once more trying to introduce their favourite plan of strict communion. They had two great obstacles—Mr. Harper was rather unsettled in opinion on this article, and the Pædobaptists had their previous agreement, from which they were determined never to recede. Various views gave birth to various contests; some of them not to the praise of religion, and altogether contributed to delay their settlement: disputes ran so high that Mr. Harper could not obtain leave to preach on adult baptism, or to administer it in public, till August 16, 1720, when a vote passed that he might do so as occasion offered; and for the first time, August 26, he preached on believer's baptism at Fulbourne, and publicly baptized there by immersion."*

Mr. Harper was not a man of learning; but being a warm and evangelical minister, his church, which at first consisted of only twenty-one members, very much increased. He died in 1741. Mr. Royston, of Burwel, preached his funeral sermon. It is said of him, "His people loved him while he lived, remember him with gratitude since his death, and retain a sense of his services to this day," (1774.)

He was succeeded by Mr. George Simson, A. M. pastor of the church at Floor, Northamptonshire. He first visited them Nov. 13, 1743, and was called to the pastoral office July 14, 1745.

* "Fulbourne is a large village, five miles east of Cambridge. Baptism was usually administered there, till 1764, sometimes in a rivulet by the mill, and at others in Scott's orchard, in a spring-head there. Since that time the river at Whittleford has been the usual place." This account was written in 1774. An account of Dr. Andrew Gifford, of London, preaching here in 1767, and of Mr. Gwennap, of Saffron Walden, baptizing forty-eight persons, was written by Mr. Robinson, in his *History of Baptism*, p. 541, and has been often reprinted. It is an elegant defence of the Baptists' principles and practice in relation to baptism.

Mr. Robert Robinson.

[1759.]

He was a Baptist minister, and the Baptist members were now able to get a resolution passed, "that the Pædobaptist members should not be removed, but that none should be admitted in future but those who had been baptized by immersion."

The church greatly declined under Mr. Simson, and about the year 1758 he was obliged to leave them. "He was," it is said, "a North Briton, and had been educated at Aberdeen, at which university he took his degree. He was a good scholar, reckoned by some a good preacher, but of a most violent temper—a lord in the church, a tyrant in his family, and a libertine in his life."

When he left Cambridge he accepted a call from the church at Norwich, who had lately buried their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Sterne. Mr. Simson continued with them two or three years, and then removed to Warwick, where he had formerly been pastor, and where, weighed down by age and infirmities, he died suddenly, 1763.

The few people who were left in Stone-Yard after Mr. Simson left them were so disconcerted and dispirited, and so low in their circumstances, that they at length shut up the doors of the meeting, and were scattered. Some of the neighbouring ministers advised them to re-unite, which they accordingly did, and had meetings for prayer, and now and then procured a supply, and thus went on till 1759.

They were informed, in the spring of 1759, that there was a youth about twenty-three years of age who had preached three years among the Methodists, who had lately been baptized at Ellingham, in Norfolk, by Mr. Drinkhorn, pastor of the church there, and who wished to settle with a Baptist congregation: this was the Rev. Robert Robinson.

This celebrated man, and distinguished preacher and writer, was born at Swaffham, in the county of Norfolk, Jan. 8, 1734. By various means, though his parents were in poor circumstances, he obtained in youth the elements of a good education. He was apprenticed to a hair-dresser, in London, March 7, 1749. At this time his favourite preachers were Dr. John Gill, and Dr. John Guise: he was also a sincere admirer of the Rev. W. Romaine, rector of St. Ann's, Blackfriars. "But the minister to whom he

1764.]

Mr. Robert Robinson.

was most affectionately attached was George Whitfield, whom he called his spiritual father. When at Norwich and Cambridge his letters to him breathe the genuine respect of a dutiful son, and the self-abasing language of a sincere Calvinist."

He had been awakened by the ministry of Mr. Whitfield, at Norwich, by a sermon founded on Matthew iii. 7. "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" About the year 1757 he thus writes in his journal:—"Lord's-day, November. Heard Mr. Whitfield this morning at Tabernacle, Acts iv. 13. Dr. Gill went on this forenoon Job xii. from the 7th to the end of 12th verse. He was very precious to me. In the afternoon he was in Daniel viii. 9. Very excellent indeed to my soul."

He began preaching this year to a few poor people at Mildenhall, Norfolk, from Job ix. 2. His preaching soon attracted attention at the Tabernacle at Norwich, and in this way he was introduced to the Baptists at Cambridge.

On being invited, he preached for the first time at Stone-Yard, July 8, 1759. The church consisted at this time of thirty-four members only, and so poor that all they could propose to raise for his support was *three pounds six shillings per quarter!** Mr. Robinson was not settled for upwards of two years. The church was then brought to declare for open communion, and several of the members protested that they would never agree to strict communion any more. He was ordained over them June 11, 1761.

Hitherto the Stone-Yard meeting had been a mean and uncomfortable place: it soon became too small for the congregation. In 1764 they purchased it for £70, pulled it down, and rebuilt it at an expense of five hundred guineas. It was opened for worship August 12, 1764.

Mr. Robinson's popularity was very great, and his occasional labours, especially as a village preacher, abundant. "The usual times," says the Rev. Josiah Thompson, "were half-past six in the evening, when the poor can best spare the time; and sometimes at five in the morning, before they go to work, and

* Mr. Dyer says, £3. 12s. 5d.

Mr. Robert Robinson.

[1770.]

now and then in summer at two in the afternoon, for the sake of far-comers: the meetings generally consist of scores, often of hundreds of people. A list of them follows:—

Villages.	Distance from Cambridge.	Time.	No. of hearers.
Dry Drayton ..	5 miles	occasional	100
Duxford	8 .....	.....	200
Foulmire	9 .....	.....	150
Foxton	8	annual	500
Fulbourne	5	stated months	400
Grandchester ..	2	occasional	100
Harston	5 .....	.....	200
Haslingfield ...	4 .....	.....	100
Hauxton	9 .....	.....	100
Ickleton	7	monthly	300
Sawston	14 .....	.....	50
Stapleford	4	occasional	200
Stanton Fen ..	10	monthly	200
Swavesey	10	occasional	100
Whittlesford ...	7 .....	.....	200

The income of Mr. Robinson had gradually increased at Cambridge, till it reached, in the year 1770, to upwards of £90. The following letter, without date, but evidently written to him soon after his settlement, from Mr. Benjamin Wallin, of London, shows that the Baptist fund contributed towards his support:—

“ Dear Sir,

“ Herewith I send you the money and pamphlets, value four pounds: the copy bound is for yourself, if there is room on your shelf. The account of your own, and your people’s condition gives me much pleasure: may the Lord continue you humble and useful, and settle it in your heart to persevere, labouring in that part of his vineyard he hath placed you in, that many may be your crown and joy in the day of his appearance! You know of my acquaintance coming to town, and as you have the opportunity, should be glad they would extend your intelligence to my advantage, that our knowledge may be mutual. Return

1770.]

Mr. Robert Robinson.

my christian respects to the person you mentioned. We join in remembrance of Mrs. Robinson, and, be assured, I am in expectation of your frequent thoughts of me at the throne of grace, with hearty prayers for you,

“ Dear Sir, Your real Friend, &c.

“ BENJAMIN WALLIN.”

It is not said how much Mr. Robinson was paid for composing sermons for some of the dignified clergymen at Cambridge. His biographer says—“ Among his papers are found one or two sermons, composed for a dignified person, of far too accommodating a character for one of his nonconformistical habits. But, though poor, he was scrupulous, and made few compliances of this kind. How far, indeed, it was consistent with the rigid principles of a dissenter to compose sermons to be preached in the episcopal church, became, at length, an affair of conscience with him; and to come to a final determination he took the advice of several reverend casuists of his own denomination.

“ In the following extract of a letter from his worthy friend, Dr. Evans, late president of the Bristol Academy, there is something humorous and diverting :—‘ But, seriously, I see no harm in the world, in your making consecration sermons, if you can get any one to preach them: if our parsons here would but preach what I could compose for them, I would work night and day, but I would serve them with better husks than they feed their flocks with now.—But ‘ the prostitution of the word of God!’—Wherein, if you make an honest scriptural sermon? If, indeed, you trim, and turn high-churchman, you will be criminal indeed.

‘ What said my brave Ferdinando?

Can a man do more than he can do?’

If he cannot storm the fortress of hierarchy, let him sap it: if he cannot overthrow it, let him undermine it: in other words, if he cannot openly preach in their cathedrals against it, in propria persona, let him do it by proxy. I see no harm in promoting the advancement of one of low principles: you may be the means of promoting a young Iaud; and, as I think none of us should

Mr. Robert Robinson.

[1790.]

scruple to preach a visitation or consecration sermon, would the bishops permit us, I see no reason why we should scruple to make one to be preached; after all, you must judge."

Thus far Mr. Robinson's history presents a noble instance of commanding talents, and of extraordinary usefulness. He had preached evangelically, and had laboured incessantly to bring sinners to love and serve the Redeemer. But alas! what is man! even the greatest of men, if they are suffered to be lifted up with pride, if they lean to their own understanding—if they give up a serious regard for the interests of vital religion, and lose an experimental savour of it on the mind—if they give up an implicit faith in the statements of divine revelation, and endeavour to reduce the mysteries of religion to the standard of human comprehension! It is not possible to read the memoirs of this celebrated man without perceiving that Mr. Robinson became a trifler in regard to serious things, and sceptical as respected the peculiar doctrines of christianity. At first pleading for the innocency of mental error, he was soon found proceeding in the high road towards Socinianism, which he ultimately reached; and, if Dr. Priestley is to be credited, but for this conciliatory scheme, would not have stopped till he had arrived at the dreary regions of infidelity.

It seems almost incredible that the man who at one period of his life wrote the hymns, "Jesus, lover of my soul," &c. "Come thou fount of every blessing," &c. and "Mighty God, while angels bless thee," &c. should have sank so low as to revile the scripture doctrines of the Trinity and other corresponding truths.

He preached at Birmingham, in the Socinian places of worship, the Lord's-day before his death. His biographer says, "Dr. Priestley was charmed with his facetiousness in conversation (for his sprightliness he seems to have retained to the last), but confessed himself much disappointed with his preaching. 'His discourse,' he says, 'was unconnected and desultory, and his manner of treating the Trinity savoured rather of burlesque than serious reasoning. He attacked orthodoxy more pointedly and sarcastically than I ever did in my life.'"

He died suddenly on the Tuesday morning following, June 9, 1790, at Shavell Green, near Birmingham, in the house of William

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Mr. Robert Robinson.

Russell, Esq. one of the friends of Dr. Priestley. He was interred in the Dissenter's burying ground, and on the next Lord's day, in the same pulpit where Mr. Robinson had ridiculed the doctrine of the Trinity, Dr. Priestley preached his funeral sermon. His biographer, in concluding his life, says, "Thus lived, and thus died Robert Robinson, a man who from an humble station in life raised himself to considerable notice, whose benign disposition, and gentle manners, entitle him to the character of an amiable man; whose genius, whose learning, whose steady opposition to every species of tyranny, as well among Protestant Dissenters as established hierarchies, entitle him to the character of a great man." The concluding part of Mr. Robinson's history is indeed most affecting; and there is no way of considering it with any hope respecting his salvation, but that in which the late Dr. Abraham Rees once expressed himself to the writer of this article, that for some time before his death he was evidently *insane*! A voice sounds from his tomb which says to every minister of the gospel, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." *

Mr. Robinson was succeeded at Cambridge by the Rev.

* His works are as follow:—1. A Translation of a few of Saurin's Sermons. 2. The Nature and Necessity of Early Piety: a Sermon, preached to a Society of Young People, at Willingham, Cambridgeshire. 3. Arcana, or, the Principles of the late Petitioners to Parliament for Relief in the Matter of Subscription. In Eight Letters to a Friend. 4. A curious Discussion of the Question, Is it Lawful and Right for a Man to marry the Sister of his deceased Wife? 5. A Lecture on a becoming Behaviour in Religious Assemblies. 6. A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ: in a Pastoral Letter, addressed to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Cambridge. 7. The Circular Letter of the Eastern Association, held at Hemel Hempstead, Herts, May, 1776. 8. The History and Mystery of Good Friday. 9. A Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity, for the Instruction of Catechumens. 10. Sermons, translated from the Original French of the late James Saurin, Pastor of the French Church at the Hague. 11. Christianity, a System of Humanity, &c. A Sermon in behalf of the Charity School at Horselydown, Southwark. 12. An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon, translated from the Original French of the Rev. John Claude, minister of the French Reformed Church, at Charenton. With Notes. 13. Christian Submission to Civil Government: a Discourse preached at Cambridge, January 30, 1780. 14. The Christian Doctrine

Church at Soham.

[1750.]

Robert Hall, A. M. After him for a time was the Rev. F. A. Cox, LL. D.; then a Mr. Chase, who has given up the ministry for the profession of the law, and the principles of dissent for those of the establishment! The present pastor is the Rev. Thomas Edmunds, M. A.

CHURCH AT SOHAM.

THE church at Soham was formed about the year 1750, under the direction of the Rev. George Simson, A. M. at that time pastor of the Baptist church at Cambridge. It was composed of a few Baptists residing in Fordham and Soham, and some others who withdrew from neighbouring churches.

of Ceremonies. A Sermon preached at the Rev. Dr. Fordyce's Meeting, in Monkswell Street, London, December 25, 1780, to the Society that support the Evening Lecture there. 15. The General Doctrine of Toleration, applied to the Particular Case of Free Communion. 16. The Kingdom of Christ not of this World. A Sermon preached at Broadmead, Bristol, August 28, 1781. 17. The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, A Sermon preached at Salters'-Hall, London, September 11, 1782, in behalf of the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor. 18. A Political Catechism, intended to Convey, in a Familiar Manner, Just Ideas of Good Civil Government, and the British Constitution. 19. Sixteen Discourses on several Texts of Scripture, addressed to Christian Assemblies, in Villages near Cambridge. To which are added Six Morning Exercises. 20. A Discourse, addressed to the Congregation at Maze-pond, Southwark, on their public declaration of having chosen Mr. James Dore, their Pastor, March 24, 1784. 21. A Sermon, preached at the Ordination of the Rev. George Birley, St. Ives, Hunts, 1784. 22. An Essay on Liberality of Sentiment, published, with some mutilation, in the first number of the Theological Magazine; by Mr. De Coetlogon. 23. A Plan of a Charity School, for the Education of the Boys and Girls of Protestant Dissenters, at Cambridge. 24. Slavery inconsistent with the Spirit of Christianity. A Sermon preached at Cambridge, February 10, 1788. 25. A Sermon on Sacramental Tests, preached at Cambridge, November 5, 1789. To which is subjoined an Essay on the Slave Trade. 26. A Translation of three Numbers of the *Revolution de Paris*. 27. The History of Baptism. 28. Ecclesiastical Researches.

1782.]

Church at Wisbeach.

Mr. John Eve was chosen their pastor, and continued with them till 1771, when he removed to Wisbeach. About a year before his removal he had the honour of baptizing a young man who was afterwards his successor, and who also proved to be one of the most distinguished and useful men which the Baptist denomination has produced. This was the Rev. Andrew Fuller. Speaking of Mr. Eve, Mr. Fuller says, "The summer of 1770 was a time of great religious pleasure. I loved my pastor, and all my brethren in the church expressed great affection towards me in return."

Some circumstances took place in the church at the close of this year, mentioned in the Memoirs of Mr. Fuller, which led to the removal of Mr. Eve, and contributed greatly towards introducing Mr. Fuller to that high station which he afterwards sustained in the Baptist churches.

The church was much distracted after this, but not dissolved; two deacons were chosen, Mr. John Diver, and Mr. John West, who is still usefully employed in Dublin, in connexion with the Baptist Irish Society. Mr. Fuller began preaching to them soon after this, but was not ordained as their pastor till May 3, 1775. The Rev. Robert Hall, of Arnsby, though situated seventy miles distant, attended on that occasion, and gave the charge from Acts xx. 28; and the Rev. John Emery, of Little Staughton, addressed the church from Gal. v. 13.

The church under Mr. Fuller consisted of about twenty members and one hundred and fifty hearers.

Mr. Fuller never received from this church more than £13. a year, besides £5. from the Baptist fund in London. He notwithstanding continued with them several years, and then removed to Kettering, in October 1782. Mr. West, before-mentioned, succeeded him at Soham.

CHURCH AT WISBEACH.

THE Baptists who resided here about 1690 built the meeting-house. Mr. Rix preached to them, and was afterwards settled

Churches at Fulbourne, Wilbraham, and Milbourne. [1772.]

their pastor, and continued in that office till his death in 1728. He died in his eighty-seventh year.

A Mr. Hour supplied them a short time. He was succeeded by a Mr. Bennett in the year 1738, who was with them two or three years. Mr. Samuel James, who had some time before finished his academical studies under Dr. Taylor, a Pædobaptist of Deptford, was there two or three years, and then removed to Hitchin, in Hertfordshire, to succeed his father-in-law, Mr. Needham, who had been removed by death about that time, 1744. Mr. John Brown supplied them in the years 1749 and 1750, and then removed to Kettering. For upwards of twenty years after there was no settled minister, but in 1771 Mr. John Eve removed from Soham, and was ordained over them. In 1744 there were not more than twenty members.

CHURCHES AT FULBOURNE, WILBRAHAM, AND MILBOURNE.

THIS was a general Baptist church founded in 1675 by Mr. John Dennis, who preached in his own house. About the same time another church was formed at Milbourne, under the ministry of Mr. Benjamin Medcalf, who died 1689. I find also the names of Mr. John Cutler, Mr. Michael Harding, and Mr. Simon Martin, who alternately supplied the above places, also preaching at Walden. A Mr. Joseph Eades came from London, and settled at Walden in 1727. Mr. Benjamin Barron assisted him. There is but little said of the several ministers, excepting that when the death of Mr. Joseph Eades is mentioned, Nov. 26, 1799, it is added, "He had served this people upwards of forty years, and had been twenty-nine years a faithful laborious pastor. In the course of his ministry there were thirty-two members added to the church; but at the close of his life the interest declined. Some of his principal members joined the Methodists. After his death the interests at the several places united, and chose Mr. Thomas Baron, June 7, 1772, who had for his assistant

1740.]

'Church at Bourton-on-the-Water.'

Mr. Christopher Payne, from Chesham, Bucks: the aggregate number of members was not more than thirty, and not one hundred hearers.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

CHURCH AT BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER.

MR. BENJAMIN BEDDOME was a most useful pastor of this church. He was a son of Mr. John Beddome, one of the pastors of the church in the Pithay, Bristol, and was born at Henley, January 23, 1717. He was baptized in London by Mr. Samuel Wilson, of Prescott Street, in the year 1739; and by that church he was called to the work of the ministry. He spent some time as a student under Mr. Bernard Foscett, of Bristol, and afterward was a student at the Independent Academy, Mile-end, London. He went to Bourton in July, 1740, and was ordained September 23, 1743. Mr. Foscett, his former tutor, gave the charge, founded upon 1 Tim. iv. 12. "Let no man despise thy youth;" and Dr. Joseph Stennett preached to the church from Heb. xiii. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you." Messrs. Hayden, Cook, and Fuller of Abingdon, prayed; and Mr. Foscett offered up the ordination prayer, with the laying on of hands by the pastors.

After the death of Mr. Samuel Wilson he received some very pressing invitations to become his successor as pastor of that flourishing community. It was to his honour that his respect for his people led him to refuse this application. "If my people," said he, "would have consented to my removal (though I should have had much to sacrifice on account of the great affection I bear to them, yet), I should then have made no scruple in accepting of your call; but as they absolutely refuse it, the will of the Lord be done. I am determined I will not violently rend myself from them; for I would rather honour

Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

[1795.]

God in a station much inferior to that in which he hath placed me, than to intrude myself into a higher without his direction."

The following account of this excellent minister is from the Baptist Register:—

"The labours of this good man among his charge were unremitted and evangelical. He fed them with the finest of the wheat. No man in all his connexions wrote more sermons, nor composed them with greater care—and this was true of him to the last weeks of his life. In most of his discourses the application of a student, and the ability of a divine were visible. He frequently differed from the generality of preachers by somewhat striking either in his text or in his method. If the passage were peculiar or abstruse, simplicity of interpretation, and familiarity in discussion, characterized the sermon: or if his text were of the most familiar class, he distributed it with novelty, discussed it with genius, and seldom delivered a hackneyed discourse. Indeed sermonizing was so much his forte, that at length when knowledge had received maturity from years, and composition was familiarized by habit, he has been known, with a wonderful facility of the moment, to sketch his picture at the foot of the pulpit stairs, to colour it as he was ascending, and, without turning his eyes from the canvas, in the same hour, to give it all the finish of a master. One instance of this will long be remembered, which happened at a ministers' meeting at Fairford, in Gloucestershire. After public service began, his natural timidity, it seems, overcame his recollection. His text and his discourse, for he did not preach by notes, had left him; and in the way from the pew to the pulpit, he leaned his head over the shoulder of the Rev. Mr. Davis, pastor of the place, and said, 'Brother Davis, what must I preach from?' Mr. Davis, thinking he could not be at a loss, answered, 'Ask no foolish questions.' This afforded him considerable relief. He turned immediately to Titus iii. 9. "Avoid foolish questions;" and he preached a remarkably methodical, correct, and useful discourse on it. Nor was he more remarkable for illustrating the divine word in general, than for his apposite quotation of its particular parts. Being a good textuary, and admitting that scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, his proofs were given with an accuracy

1795.]

Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

of selection, and received under the effect of an admiring conviction. When he placed a passage of scripture by a particular of his discourse, intelligent auditors said, as David concerning the sword of Goliath, "There is none like it," or equally suitable, through all the sacred volume.

"In his preaching he laid Christ at the bottom of religion as the support of it, placed him at the top of it as its glory, and made him the centre of it, to unite all its parts, and to add beauty and vigour to the whole. As he carefully guarded his people against Arminian principles, so he earnestly dehorted them from countenancing Antinomian practices, with every sentiment which tended to lessen their sincere regard for the law of God—maintaining, that, while it is the happiness of good men to be delivered from the law as a covenant of works, it is their duty, and therefore their honour and interest, to be subject to it as a rule of walk and conversation. He was assured, that the least contempt cast on the law tarnishes the gospel—that those who think lightly of sin cannot exalt the Saviour—that the same word which asserts believers are dead to the law, so as neither to be distressingly afraid of it, nor to place a fiducial dependence on it, does as expressly declare that they are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. It was an axiom with him, that "If moral weakness and incapacity do not, certainly moral privileges cannot, lessen our obligations to duty." From this may be gathered, what indeed was a fact, that his discourses were an happy mixture of the doctrinal, experimental, and practical parts of religion.

"Though his voice was low, his delivery was forcible and demanded attention. He addressed the hearts and consciences of his hearers. His inventive faculty was extraordinary, and threw an endless variety into his public services. Nature, providence, and grace, had formed him for eminence in the church of Christ.

"How acceptable his labours were to the churches, when he could be prevailed on to visit them, has long been known at Abingdon, Bristol, London, and in the circle of the Midland Association.

"It is not easy to ascertain the exact number of members

Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

[1795.]

in 1740, when Mr. Beddome went to Bourton, as the oldest church book is lost. In May, 1743, when forty-eight persons had been added to the Society, they were in all 113—if then fifteen persons died in these three years, there must have been about eighty communicants in the year 1740; but whether fewer or more at that time, such was his success, that in 1751 they were increased to 180. The largeness of such a number in any church will be the occasion of a decrease, unless considerable additions are annually made; but in May, 1764, thirteen years after the other calculation, notwithstanding deaths, and other changes, the number had kept up to 176, and at the close of the year 1766, there had been added to the church, from the time of Mr. Beddome's first coming, about 196 persons.

“One considerable instrument of his success may be learnt from the letter he sent to the Association in 1754. In this it was said, that the work of catechising was kept up at Bourton ‘with advantage to the children, and to many grown persons who attended thereon.’ In conducting this service the people were astonished at the words which proceeded out of his lips. But his Catechism will be the best representation of his method. This is indeed a compendium of Divinity. As a larger catechism than Mr. Keach's had been greatly wanted among the Baptist denomination, he was induced, by the pressing solicitations of many of his friends, to compose this work in imitation of Mr. Henry's. In his preface to the first edition, printed in 1752, he laments the melancholy state of those churches and families where catechising is thrown aside—how much many of them have degenerated from the faith, and others from the practice, of the gospel. The second edition of this invaluable work was printed at Bristol in 1776, by the late excellent Dr. Evans, who highly prized it, and introduced it among his numerous acquaintance.

“As Mr. Beddome had a pleasing poetical talent, he accustomed himself, through the chief part of his life, to prepare a hymn to be sung after his morning sermon, every Lord's-day. Several specimens of these compositions have appeared, with credit to their author, and are used in many of the Baptist churches, as well as in some other respectable congregations.

“In 1770 the Fellows of Providence College, Rhode Island,

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Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

conferred on him the degree of A. M. as a token of respect for his literary abilities; nor was it the only one to which he was entitled. Being a scholar himself, and residing in a more secluded situation than many of his brethren, he gave several of his sons a classical education at home.

“ In his time the Rev. John Ryland, sen. Richard Haynes, John Reynolds, Nathaniel Rawlins, and Alexander Payne, were called to the ministry by his church, in all of whom he had reason to rejoice.

“ But it is not to be supposed that he was free from trials—sorrows were mingled with his songs in the house of his pilgrimage. Among the most pungent may be reckoned those which arose from the early deaths of his three sons, John, Benjamin, and Foscett. John was born January 7, 1750, and died enjoying a very desirable frame of mind, February 4, 1765. His brother Foscett, brought up in the medical line, was drowned as he was coming from on board a ship near Deptford, October 28, 1784, in the twenty-sixth year of his age. Benjamin was born October 10, 1753. Trained as a professional man, and availing himself of the wisdom which a combination of circumstances threw in his way, his prospects at length became highly flattering. He was master of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, before he went from Bourton to London, and afterwards obtained a knowledge of the French and Italian. He was admitted a member of the medical society at Edinburgh before the usual time, and took his doctor’s degree at Leyden, September 13, 1777. His thesis has been much admired. It is entitled, “*Tentamen Philosophico-medicum inaugurale de hominum varietatibus et earum causis.*” This inaugural Philosophico-medical essay, concerning the varieties of men and their causes, fills fifty-two handsome pages, in octavo, comprehending a vast variety of matter, and forming, what perhaps competent judges will denominate, an accurate syllabus of the subject. If fine talents, and smiling connexions, could have detained him on earth he had not been removed; but in all the bloom of full life, not having completed the twenty-fifth year of his age, he died at Edinburgh of a putrid fever, January 4, 1778.

“ Mr. Beddome considered it as somewhat observable, that on

Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

[1795.]

on the very day his son died, not suspecting the news he should receive the next morning, nor indeed knowing of his illness, he preached from Psalm xxxi. 15. "My times are in thy hand," after which this remarkable hymn, which he had composed for the sermon, was sung:—

' My times of sorrow, and of joy,
Great God, are in thy hand ;
My choicest comforts come from thee,
And go at thy command.

If thou should'st take them all away,
Yet would I not repine ;
Before they were possess'd by me,
They were entirely thine.

Nor would I drop a murmuring word,
Though the whole world were gone,
But seek enduring happiness
In thee, and thee alone.

What is the world with all its store ?
'Tis but a bitter sweet ;
When I attempt to pluck the rose
A pricking thorn I meet.

Here perfect bliss can ne'er be found,
The honey's mix'd with gall ;
'Midst changing scenes and dying friends,
Be thou my all in all.'

"Mr. Beddome had also before Lord's-day, the 4th of January, made preparations for the ensuing sabbath, January 11th, which was the day before he received the melancholy account of his son's death, from Ezek. x. 12. 'The wheels were full of eyes round about.' Both of these sermons were studied without any particular view. When Mr. Beddome records these notable things, he says, 'But alas! how much easier is it to preach than practice! I will complain to God, but not of God. This is undoubtedly the most affecting loss I have ever yet sustained in my family. Father of mercies, let me see the smiles of thy face,

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Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

whilst I feel the smart of thy rod. Job xiv. 13. 'Thou destroyest the hope of man.'

'Early, bright, transient, chaste as morning dew,
He sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven.'

"Mr. Beddome having for some time felt his infirmities increasing, the church, in 1777, began to look out for a person to assist him in the ministry, and obtained the Rev. William Wilkins, of Cirencester, who had been for some time a student at Bristol, and finished his education in Scotland. In their letter to the Association, held at Warwick, 1778, the church says, 'The assistant we have procured for our pastor is every way acceptable both to him and us, and we hope the Lord has blessed his labours.' But, though fast advancing in years, Mr. Beddome persevered in his pastoral duties.

"The Association at Evesham, in 1789, was the last he ever attended, or preached at.—His first sermon addressed to this body was at Leominster in 1743. He preached to them seventeen times in forty-six years; this, on an average, was as frequently as he could have been chosen to the service—for it has long been a rule in the Midland Assembly, that no person shall be chosen to preach at the Association oftener than once in three years.—But, perhaps, on examination it will appear, in the instance of Mr. Beddome, that this has not been always strictly adhered to from the year 1740, and it seems there was no such limitation at that time.

"From his last visit to the Association, in 1789, to the end of his days, he set apart for charitable designs, and gave away, all that he received from the people for his services. He was in London to see his children and friends in 1792, and preached with the same acceptance as ever. Though he had a multitude of sermons which had never been preached, he kept on composing, and was lively in his ministry to the very last—and it has been said, that his discourses of late years have, after all, been his best; but towards the last, he generally destroyed them on the Monday after he had preached them. For a considerable time he was carried to and from meeting, and preached sitting.

"In the near prospect of death he was calm and resigned.

Mr. Benjamin Beddome.

[1795.]

It had been his earnest wish not to be long laid aside from his beloved work of preaching the gospel, and his prayer was remarkably answered, as he was ill but one Lord's-day; yea, he was composing a hymn about six hours before he died. These are some of the unfinished lines of it:—

‘ God of my life, and of my choice,
Shall I no longer hear thy voice?
O let that source of joy divine,
With rapture fill this heart of mine !

Thou openedst Jonah's prison doors,
Be pleased, O Lord, to open ours;
Then will we to the world proclaim
The various honours of thy name.’

“ He had left a desire on paper, that no funeral discourse should be preached for him; but as this was not found till after his interment, his affectionate friend, the Rev. Benjamin Francis, performed the funeral solemnities. His text on this solemn occasion was Phil. i. 21. “ To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” From which he considered, first, the excellent life, and the gainful death of Paul. And then, secondly, applied the words to the deceased; not as at any time the vaunting language of his lips, but as the humble and ardent desire of his devotional heart. At the close of the sermon, the corpse, which had been in the place of worship all the time of service, was interred in the yard, near the meeting-house door; after which, Mr. Francis, who remained in the pulpit, recommended to the very numerous audience a due improvement of the labours of this great man of God, and insisted on the importance of being prepared for death.

“ Mr. Beddome had arrived at the good old age of seventy-nine years, fifty-five of which he ministered at Bourton. He departed this life, September 3, 1797. We believe he has not printed any thing beside his Catechism, and the Midland Association Letter in 1765. He has, however, left behind him numerous sketches of sermons. From these manuscripts a selection might be made which would probably redound as much to his credit, as to the advantage of the religious public. But whether we are to be favoured with this desirable publication or

1705.]

Church at Shortwood.

not, must be left to his worthy sons, whose wisdom, discretion, and public spirit leave us not entirely without hope."

The selections from his manuscript sermons have been, within the few last years, printed in three volumes, as also a volume of excellent hymns.

Mr. Beddome was succeeded by the present pastor, Mr. Thomas Coles, who was a member of the church.

CHURCH AT SHORTWOOD.

THE origin of this church is thus stated by Mr. William Winterbotham, in a discourse made on the centenary of its establishment, 1805:—

"About the year 1705, two individuals, William Harding, and John Howard, then in the habit of attending on the ministry of Dr. Giles, pastor of the Pædobaptist church meeting at Forest Green, became dissatisfied with his ministry, principally on account of his views of the person of Christ;—communicating their sentiments and feelings to each other, they withdrew their attendance, and visited together the different places of worship in the neighbourhood. They soon, however, became more particularly attached to the ministry of Mr. Jonathan Davis, then pastor of the Baptist church at King-Stanley; and here, for a time, they constantly attended. Howard, from some cause now unknown, subsequently withdrew from his companion, who afterwards became a decisive advocate of Believers' Baptism, and was, at length, with his daughter, baptized, and united to the church at King-Stanley.

"Previously to this event, Dr. Giles, at an appointed interview, seems to have entered with him into a controversy on the subject of Adult Baptism, on a profession of faith, but found him fixed and determined as to the change of his sentiments. The Doctor was led afterwards to address his congregation, for fourteen Lord's-days successively, in the afternoon, in defence of Infant Baptism.

“ The wisdom of this effort, or the ability with which it was conducted, forms no part of my plan to investigate; but the result enters deeply into it, and was precisely what might have been foreseen by any man conversant with human nature. Many, from this time, gave up attendance on the Doctor’s ministry, and went to Stanley; so that, on the Lord’s-day, the number who accompanied each other to that place amounted, on an average, to fifty persons, many of whom were soon baptized, and united in the fellowship of the gospel with that church.

“ About the close of 1707, or the beginning of 1708, at the suggestion of one Edward Essex, several of those persons licensed the house of William Harding, of Walkley Wood, in the parish of Horsley, and entered into an agreement with each other to hold meetings for prayer in the week, and on the evenings of the Lord’s-day;—an agreement arising out of their distance from the church with which many of them were united, and the want of a gospel ministry near them, on which they might occasionally attend.

“ At this house Mr. Davis, their pastor, and Mr. Joseph Matthews, of Malmesbury, occasionally preached to them; and here they continued their prayer-meetings for about six years, until the increasing attendance became such as rendered it too small and inconvenient, and, consequently, they turned their attention to building a larger place, for the exclusive purpose of divine worship.

“ A plan of this nature was more easily conceived, than realized, by a poor people, unknown, and unconnected with any but those as poor as themselves. They were, however, determined to make the attempt; and were much encouraged by Mr. Henry Allen, a member of the Baptist church at Frome, and a Mr. Bull, who appears to have been his intimate friend.—These persons, visiting this county on business, and occasionally meeting with them, entered into their views and necessities; and, by a donation of ten pounds, and other contributions, obtained among their friends, greatly assisted them, and forwarded the completion of the proposed object. A Mrs. Keene, also, though not professedly one of their number, but who worshipped with them, greatly encouraged them by the assistance she afforded.

1719.]

Church at Shortnood.

“ Thus encouraged, in 1714, a piece of ground, part of that on which the present building stands, was purchased; and, in the following year, a contract was entered into for the building, with a person of the name of Newth, and for which, through the kindness of friends, they were enabled to discharge all claims as soon as erected. The building was, however, the mere shell, without any ceiling, gallery, pews, or pulpit. These were, as yet, articles too costly for their circumstances, and to which their ambition did not therefore aspire.

“ For this building a license was obtained at the Michaelmas sessions, 1715; and, on the Tuesday in the Easter week of the following year, it was opened by Mr. Joseph Price, pastor of the Baptist church at Tewkesbury, by a sermon from the Gospel by John, 1st chapter, and 12th verse.

“ The prospect of possessing a place of worship had naturally awakened the desire of being more closely united, by entering into a church-state; hence, when the foundation of their meeting-house was laid, thirteen persons, four men and nine women, all of whom had been previously baptized, were united together in the fellowship of the gospel, as a church of Christ; on which solemn occasion they enjoyed the assistance, advice, and prayers, of Mr. Benjamin Britain, pastor of the church at King-Stanley, and of Messrs. William Freeman, and James Lovell, of the church at Cirencester. This to them must have been a memorable year, as in it they laid the foundation of a house for the stated worship of God, and formed a union among themselves, destined, on a future day, to realize their fondest hopes and expectations.

“ After the meeting-house was opened, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Lovell appear, for some time, to have supported the ministration of the gospel in it; on what terms, or in what character, we know not. They were succeeded by a Mr. Seville, a young man, who is said to have suffered considerable persecution from his friends, on account of his joining the Baptist denomination. He was removed, after a short illness, by death, in August, 1719, and interred just within the door of the meeting-house, where a stone, with his initials, attests the resting place of his mortal remains. Whether Mr. Seville was ever united to the Society,

Church at Shortwood.

[1734.]

we possess no means of ascertaining. Great expectations were, evidently, formed from his labours; and his death spread a gloom over the Society, which was dispelled with difficulty. That he was cordially united with the people, and that they, in turn, cherished a sincere affection for him, appears evident, by a legacy of ten pounds which he left towards the erection of a vestry, and the interest with which some of our aged members still dwell on the records of ancient times respecting him.

“After the death of Mr. Seville, there was no preaching for five months; at the termination of which a union was formed, to supply the pulpit, by Mr. Foskett, of Bristol; Dr. Ingram; Mr. Thomas Jones, of Fairford; Mr. Ketterel; Mr. Ludlow; Mr. Plomer; and Mr. Price, of Tewkesbury.

“This united effort appears to have been continued between three and four years; after which the pulpit was occupied by a Mr. Read, of whom we know, at this time, only, that he continued to officiate for nearly four years more. He was succeeded by a Mr. Caleb Brooks, who remained about a similar period. and was then succeeded by a Mr. John Ballinger, who remained only about nine months.

“During this period of fifteen years, from the death of Mr. Seville, it appears evident, that the church was in a very low condition. No regular administration of the Lord’s Supper had taken place, till the time of Mr. Ballinger, and twelve persons only were added to their number; while the extreme poverty of the church and congregation seemed to exclude the hope of a settled pastor, and a more prosperous condition. During the time Mr. Ballinger occupied the pulpit, two neighbouring pastors, Mr. Flower, and Mr. Parks, engaged for the regular administration of the Supper every two months; and, after Mr. Ballinger left, Mr. Flower, Jun. a son of the above, became the most constant supply, till September, 1732, when he received an invitation, apparently unanimous, to supply the pulpit every other sabbath, and for which the church offered him a salary of twelve pounds per annum; five pounds ten shillings of which were supplied by the London and Bristol funds.

“Mr. Flower accepted the invitation; and, in December, 1734, he was invited to the pastoral office, which he refused;

1737.]

Church at Shortrood.

notwithstanding which he steadily continued his engagement, until March, 1736, when he accepted a call from the church in Unicorn Yard, in the Borough of Southwark, and removed to London.

“ The period of Mr. Flower’s residence and labours was the most prosperous era the church here had seen: forty members were added to their number, thirty-eight of whom were baptized on profession of faith in the Redeemer, and two received from other churches, by letters of recommendation. Some of these also appear to have been valuable for their prudence and energy of character, particularly William Harding, who, though he had contributed so much to the formation of the church, had continued his connexion with the church at Stanley, till about the period when Mr. Flower accepted the invitation given him in 1732. The letter of his dismissal, and the intermediate election of him by this church, to the office of deacon, speak much for the character of the man and the christian.

“ The intermediate sabbaths, on which Mr. Flower was not engaged, were supplied by neighbouring ministers, among whom we find the names of Mr. J. Flower, Sen. of Cirencester; John Read, their former minister; Robert Major; John Ballinger; John Beddome, of Bristol; Mr. Parks; Hugh Evans, of Bristol; Morgan Harry; Edward Cooke; and others.

“ The average allowance made by the church to these supplies was, from five to ten shillings, according to the distance they had to travel.

“ After the removal of Mr. Flower, for the next half-year, the ministry was carried on by some of the above individuals, who had previously assisted; among whom we now find also the names of Mr. John Wilkins, Mr. Bennicke, and Mr. Humphries; in the last quarter of this year, we find them also visited by Mr. Haydon, of London, who subsequently became their pastor. He appears to have returned to London, after this first visit; to have accepted a further invitation on probation, early in 1737; and, in the month of July, of the same year, he accepted the invitation of the church to become its pastor.

“ Mr. Haydon had lately been called into the ministry, by the

Church.at Shortwood.

[1755.]

baptized church, in Prescott-street, Goodman's-fields, then under the pastoral care of Mr. Samuel Wilson.

“ On the 27th of September, he was ordained over the church, as its pastor. On this occasion, Mr. Hugh Evans, of Bristol, began the service with prayer, reading, and expounding the scriptures. Mr. Flower, of Cirencester, asked the questions, and offered up the ordination prayer, in the usual way, which was accompanied by laying on of hands. Mr. Foskett, of Bristol, gave the charge, from John xxi. 16. ‘ Feed my sheep.’ Mr. Thompson, I believe, of Clapham, preached to the church, from Ephesians ii. 21. ‘ In whom all the building fitly framed,’ &c. and closed the service.

“ Mr. Haydon, in accepting the pastoral office, does not appear to have covenanted for any particular salary. On an average of the accounts, while he remained, he appears to have received twenty pounds per annum, besides the London and Bristol funds; and four pounds, four shillings, annually, from Abingdon;—averaging, together, about thirty pounds.

“ In consequence of ill health, Mr. Haydon was, at his own request, dismissed to the church at Tewkesbury, on August 23, 1752, between which, and himself, a friendly connexion had long subsisted. He printed two sermons on original sin, of which the late Mr. Benjamin Francis presented a new edition to the public in 1779. There is a good portrait of him.

“ In September, 1753, the church invited Mr. Samuel Bowen, a member of the church in Prescott-street, London, and lately called into the ministry, to supply, as a probationer, for six months; with which request he complied, and, in January, 1754, he was invited to the pastoral office;—to this invitation, in the following month, he replied, postponing a definitive answer for twelve months, for reasons which he states to be well known, and which were, evidently, the then distracted state of the Society, arising out of the late connexion with Mr. Flower. To this proposed delay all parties assented, and Mr. Bowen continued his labours until the 20th of February, 1755, when the church renewed their invitation to him to exercise among them the office of pastor, and to take the charge and oversight of them in the Lord.

1765.]

Mr. Benjamin Francis.

“Mr. Bowen was, accordingly, dismissed from the church to which he was before related, on the 22d of June, and ordained to the pastoral office, July 16th, 1755, by Dr. Stennett, of London; Mr. Hugh Evans, and Mr. J. Tommas, of Bristol; Mr. Davis, of Fairford; Mr. Parsons, of Bath; and Mr. Haydon, their former minister.”

The most distinguished of its pastors was the excellent Mr. Benjamin Francis, who entered upon his labours at Shortwood October 1757. On the 12th of October, 1758, he was ordained to the pastoral office by Mr. J. Tommas, and Mr. Hugh Evans, of Bristol; Mr. Davis, of Fairford; and Mr. Bowen, the late pastor; between whom and the church, Mr. Francis had interposed his good offices, and renewed the feelings of christian love. On this interesting occasion Mr. Tommas gave the charge, from Colossians iv. 17; and Mr. Evans addressed the church, from 1 Thessalonians ii. 19.

“Under the ministry of Mr. Francis, both church and congregation rapidly increased in numbers and respectability, so that, in April, 1760, only eighteen months after his ordination, it became necessary to make some addition to the size of the meeting-house.

“The labours of Mr. Francis were not confined to his own church,—the towns and villages around engaged much of his attention;—Minchin-Hampton, Avening, Uley, and Nympsfield, in particular, called forth his exertions; in the first of these places, in the year 1765, he undertook the erection of a place of worship, which, including the purchase of the ground, cost four hundred pounds; which was opened in the month of September, by Mr. Hugh Evans, of Bristol. From this time, also, Mr. Francis, whose popularity was now considerable, visited, and preached frequently in, most of the churches of our denomination, within a circuit of about thirty miles.

“Mr. Francis had the happiness to see a continued and progressive increase in the church and congregation; though, at this time, he had his trials, as well as comforts, from some of his flock, who, in their own estimation, were wiser than their teacher, and from others, whose immoral conduct rendered their separation necessary.

Mr. Benjamin Francis.

[1799.]

“ Of Mr. Francis, as a man, or as a minister, it is not necessary for me to say much. His character has been drawn, his talents displayed, and his labours delineated by those who had the advantage of an acquaintance more intimate than any to which I can pretend. Yet a few observations may not be altogether impertinent.

“ In contemplating the character and labours of this almost invaluable minister of Christ, the mind is naturally impressed with the peculiar adaptation of his talents to the station he was called to occupy. He was not learned, nor did his situation require it. His address was popular, his language plain, and his style simple and unadorned. His voice was clear, harmonious, and impressive; and the tears which frequently accompanied the exhibitions of a Saviour’s sufferings and grace, when beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, rendered his exhortations often truly impressive; while the animating and heavenly glow which rested on his countenance, when speaking of the beauties of holiness, and the joys of another world, was such as kindled the warmest emotions of heavenly mindedness in the pious hearts of his converted hearers. His sermons were never laboured; short notes were all he ever committed to paper,—mere outlines of a general plan,—every thing else besides depended on the Divine assistance he might receive in the pulpit. Living near to God, as he eminently did, his plan was, perhaps, the best that could be adopted among a plain people; but it would have been far otherwise in a minister whose mind and feelings were less habitually under this influence.

“ The features, also, of his ministry, deserve notice; warmly attached, as he was, to the doctrines of Free Grace, there was yet nothing in his sermons of a controversial or disputatious kind;—nothing calculated to form the noisy and contentious sectary, but every thing to call forth the spirit of a humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the taste and religious feeling of the church, at his death, exhibited the best monument of his worth as a minister, and excellency as a preacher.

“ That his labours were eminently successful, will appear evident, when we consider, that, from 1758, when he was ordained, to 1799, when he died, there was only one year in which the

1799.]

Mr. Benjamin Francis.

church did not experience a considerable addition to its numbers; and that the number of members united to the church, while under his care, was four hundred and thirty-two, only thirteen of whom were received from other churches.

“ The importance of Mr. Francis to the church at Shortwood was not, however, confined to his exertions at home; his labours in other places were so abundant, his usefulness so great, his talents so admired, and his character so revered, that he shed a lustre over the Society to which he belonged, and created a general interest throughout the denomination, on behalf of a church, which, from the peculiarity of its local circumstances, would, under another minister, have been comparatively unknown.

“ The popularity of Mr. Francis, and the high estimation in which he was held, while it exposed the church to the frequent hazard of losing his labours, in consequence of the temptations and allurements which were held forth for his removal to the metropolis and other places, were highly beneficial to the poor of his charge. He became the secret almoner of many a rich and pious follower of the Redeemer; and, however scantily his own purse might be supplied, that which he carried in trust for others was seldom, if ever, empty. The fact was, and I here speak within the range of my own knowledge, that, while every thing exhibits his unwearied solicitude for the welfare of his charge, when at home, he never lost sight of them, or forgot to plead their cause, while abroad. He was always the pastor of his church, wherever he was, or however he was engaged: his poor people, their excellencies, their privations, sufferings, and wants, were always prominent, when aught could be obtained for them; and the manner in which this bounty was doled out, undoubtedly gave him an influence, powerful indeed, but always exerted for the benefit of the church.

“ I have glanced, in an expression above, at Mr. Francis's temporal circumstances, as scanty and limited; and I conceive it no censure on him to say, this was the case for a great part of his life. His family was large and afflicted; and, amidst the concerns of the church, he lost sight of himself, and preferred his

Mr. Benjamin Francis.

[1799.]

labours here, on a limited income, to offers which would have placed him above inconvenience and want.

“On his assumption of the pastoral charge, his salary was not more than forty pounds per annum ; and it was only a few years before his death, that it was made up to one hundred pounds.

“The day which witnessed the death of Mr. Francis, December 14, 1799, saw the church over which he had presided covered with a gloom which few beside himself had anticipated, and for which none were prepared. His mind, indeed, seemed to have realized its approach. He felt it, in anticipation ; and often suggested to his friends the importance of being prepared for it. But in them, fond hope triumphed over all those forebodings, and thus contributed to render the stroke more afflictive when it was actually felt. There was, indeed, something in the time and circumstances in which the event took place, which tended much to aggravate the loss ; nor can I better express my own views of it, than in the language of him whose situation rendered him most capable of estimating the magnitude of the evil sustained. ‘It was,’ says Mr. Flint, ‘at the time when the meeting-house was greatly enlarging,—the day for its being reopened almost fixed,—the auditory much increasing,—myself gradually stepping forth into public labours, and needing a friend so discreet and affectionate to lead me forward to larger services and greater acceptance.’

“Every usual mark of respect was shown to the memory of this faithful servant of our blessed Lord. His deacons bore his mortal remains to the adjoining grave-yard. The ministers around attended the solemn scene, and Dr. Ryland delivered on the occasion a serious address, and further improved his death, on the following Lord’s-day, in a sermon, afterwards printed by the desire of the church.—A monument was erected over his grave, where the eye still weeps over departed excellency, and the heart feels the flutter of joy at the hope of one day meeting him again.

“At the death of Mr. Francis, the number of members in church fellowship amounted to two hundred and forty-one ; scattered through a number of parishes ; many at a considerable distance, poor and afflicted, and the far greater part requiring a

1800.]

Mr. Flint.

degree of watchful superintendence, of which none can judge who are unacquainted with the nature of manufacturing districts. These, together with the congregation, constituted a heavy charge, when devolving on a young man hardly acquainted with his own powers, and less acquainted with the world or the church.

“ After the death of Mr. Francis, Mr. Flint, his son-in-law, who had been chosen his assistant at the beginning of the year, occupied the pulpit, regularly, till February the 16th, when, the enlargement of the meeting-house being completed, it was formally re-opened with two sermons, by Dr. Ryland; after both of which, collections were made towards defraying the expenses incurred: forty-six pounds were contributed, which, together with fifty pounds presented by a family present on the occasion, was all the church received towards an expense of six hundred and eighty pounds, the remainder of which was cheerfully defrayed by themselves within a few months. On the 12th of March, the church held a solemn day of prayer, to implore the Divine guidance and blessing; and, on the 16th of the same month, they gave Mr. Flint a call to assume the pastoral office, which, being present at the meeting, he must have accepted at the same time, as, at this meeting, the ordination service was fixed for the 16th of the following month.

“ If any thing can justify the hasty manner in which Mr. Flint engaged in this arduous undertaking, it must have been the almost unanimous feeling with which the invitation was given; there being but one voice opposed, and that more to the hastiness of the measure, than to the union itself. Both parties were evidently carried forward rather by their feelings than their judgments; for, if reflection had been exercised on a variety of circumstances obvious to every observer, the period of this interesting union would have been more distant; but the union itself would, probably, have been more enduring. As it was, however, the ordination took place at the time appointed; and few anticipated the painful results which followed.

“ Mr. Wilkins, of Bourton-on-the-Water, originally a member of the church, and called by it into the ministry, opened the business of the day, and received the confession of faith.

Church at Cirencester.

[1750.

Mr. Enoch Francis, then at Wantage, offered the ordination prayer. Dr. Ryland gave the charge, from Proverbs xxii. 17, 18. Mr. Burchell, of Tetbury, preached to the church from 2 Peter iii. 1.

“ Under the ministry of Mr. Flint, the church and congregation continued gradually to increase; yet his situation soon became very painful.—A feeling of dissatisfaction early manifested itself, which continued to increase, until June, 1803, when he saw it right to relinquish his pastoral labours, and to retire from further services in the pulpit.

“ It would be no difficult task to portray the causes which led to this painful event, or to delineate the circumstances by which it was effected: let it, however, suffice to say, that whatever they were, they were nothing derogatory to Mr. Flint’s character, as a man, a christian, or a minister.”

Mr. Winterbotham succeeded Mr. Flint, in April, 1804, and is lately deceased.

This church is now one of the largest in the denomination: it is at present destitute of a pastor; and, on account of the poverty to which the bulk of the people are reduced, unable to provide for the suitable support of a minister.

CHURCH AT CIRENCESTER.

MR. JOHN REYNOLDS, afterwards of Cripplegate, London, was with this church from 1750 to 1761. From that time, till the settlement of Mr. William Dore, in August, 1776, the church was in a very uncomfortable situation. Mr. Dore was a brother of the late Mr. James Dore, of London. He was baptized by Mr. Stredling, at Lymington, in 1772, and sent by that church to Bristol Academy. When Mr. Dore became the pastor the church was reduced to seven members; but in September, 1786, they had increased to thirty-seven. Mr. Dore died in 1791. He was succeeded by Mr. White, who is still pastor.

1804.]

Churches at Cheltenham and Tewkesbury.

CHURCH AT CHELTENHAM.

THIS church was originally a branch of that at Tewkesbury. In 1733 Mr. Benjamin Barnes was called out by the parent church to supply that branch of the church which met at Cheltenham. He died in 1751.

On June 20, 1753, it was agreed by the church at Tewkesbury that the members residing in or near Cheltenham should have leave to form themselves into a separate church; and twenty-one members were dismissed for that purpose.

Nothing further is known of the history of this church, excepting that Mr. Williams, who is now residing in that town, was the pastor for several years. Several other respectable ministers have been there since he resigned his office, and the present pastor is Mr. Jenkin Thomas.*

CHURCH AT TEWKESBURY.

THE present meeting-house was erected in 1804. Its dimension is fifty-three feet by thirty-three, with three galleries; it will seat about six hundred and fifty, and contain one hundred more. The tenure is freehold, vested in twelve or thirteen trustees.

Mr. John Haydon settled here in 1752. Mr. Thomas Hiller, from Mr. Booth's church in London, was ordained September 26, 1771. Messrs. Hugh Evans, and Tommas, of Bristol, preached on the occasion. He died June 27, 1790. Mr. John Davis, from Moleston, Pembrokeshire, was ordained May 29, 1792. He afterwards removed to Bampton, Devon. The present pastor is Mr. Daniel Trotman, who was ordained September 8, 1803.

* Since the above was written Mr. Thomas has left the church.

ESSEX.

CHURCH AT HARLOW.

THE first pastor of this church was Mr. William Woodward, who had been ejected in 1662. He laboured at Harlow and Parndon about fifty years, and died in 1712. He was succeeded, as pastor, by Mr. Thomas Chalkley, of Naying, in the same county. His wife was a descendant of the famous martyr, Thomas Hawkes, who was burnt at Coggeshall, through the cruelty of Bishop Bonner. Mr. Chalkley died in the year 1750, at the advanced age of ninety years. He had for his assistant in the ministry, at the latter part of his life, Mr. Horsnall, who preached alternately at Harlow and Naying. Mr. Rist succeeded Mr. Chalkley, and continued about five years, and afterwards settled at Rye, in Sussex. The occasion of his leaving Harlow was the offence taken by some of the principal people because Mr. Rist had introduced psalmody in public worship. Mr. Isaac Gould, who had married the daughter of the former minister, Mr. Chalkley, succeeded Mr. Rist. Under his ministry the church and congregation were reunited, and again prospered. A new and commodious place of worship was erected in 1764. Mr. Gould, during a ministry of nearly forty years, was enabled to maintain the character of a pious, faithful, and enlightened minister of Jesus Christ. He died November 30, 1794, aged seventy-four, and was interred in the burying ground, in Forster-street, belonging to the congregation.

During the last part of his life he was assisted by Mr. John Sandys, who continued only five years at Harlow, and in the spring of 1795 removed to Hammersmith.

Mr. B. P. Severn, a member of Mr. Swain's church at Walworth, succeeded in 1795. He was ordained October 12, 1796. For about fifteen years Mr. Severn's ministry was so acceptable and useful, that in 1810 the meeting-house was enlarged to accommodate about six hundred persons: the next year two large

1717.]

Church at Potter's Street.

vestries, or school-rooms, were erected. The whole expense, amounting to about £900. was raised by the congregation and their connexions in the neighbourhood. Mr. Severn having embraced the Socinian scheme of doctrines in the year 1816, and refused to resign his office, the greater part of the members and subscribers who had, by a letter signed by a majority, requested him to do so, withdrew from the old meeting, and fitted up another place of worship, which was opened May 20, 1816. The following November Mr. Severn resigned his office, and soon after the seceders returned and reunited with the old church and congregation.

The present respectable and evangelical minister is Mr. Thomas Finch, who settled with this church in 1817.

CHURCH AT POTTER'S STREET.

THIS village is within about two miles of Harlow, and it is conjectured the church at Potter's street grew out of the labours of Mr. Woodward, mentioned as the founder of the church at that place.

Mr. Jonas Thorowgood, it is probable, succeeded its first pastor, Mr. Peake, who had baptized him in 1717. He was ordained soon after, and died July 2, 1753, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. Mr. Benjamin Wallin, of London, preached his funeral sermon, in the meeting-house at Little Parndon, from 1 Tim. i. 12.

Mr. John Nottage was the next pastor. In the year 1756 the meeting-house was built at Potter's street, and the place at Parndon was given up. After about twenty years he resigned the pastorate, and died in April, 1776. Mr. Gould, of Harlow, preached his funeral sermon, in which he spoke highly of his character and usefulness.

Mr. James Brown, who had been a member of the church in Unicorn yard, London (and who had received an education for the ministry under Mr. William Clarke, its pastor) was ordained July 19, 1775. He died October, 1803, aged fifty-two, and was

Church at Saffron Walden.

[1774.

buried at Potter's street. Mr. John Bain, the present pastor, succeeded, being ordained July 7, 1804. Soon after he settled, there being no house to be found for his residence, he was enabled, by the liberality of the public, to erect a comfortable residence for himself and the future pastors of the church.

CHURCH AT SAFFRON WALDEN.

THIS church was originally a separation from the Independent congregation in the town, of which the Rev. Joseph Gwennap was pastor. The separation took place in the year 1774, on which occasion Mr. Gwennap (a Baptist minister of mixed communion principles) and the far larger part of the church and congregation with him, owing to a disagreement with the party who remained, left the place in which they had been accustomed to assemble, and formed a separate congregation.

The meeting-house was erected in 1774: its dimensions are fifty-one feet square. It will seat about eight hundred people, and contain more than a thousand: the tenure is freehold. Mr. Gwennap removed in the year 1783, and the Rev. Matthew Walker was ordained pastor in 1787. Mr. (now Dr.) Rippon gave the charge, and Mr. Pilley preached to the people. Mr. Walker left in the month of February, 1809. The church, which was unceasing in prayer to God for the gracious interposition of his Providence, was directed, by a series of remarkable coincidences, to the Rev. J. Wilkinson, the present minister, who went in the month of May, and was ordained in October, 1809. Mr. Button gave the charge. Mr. Geard preached to the people, and the church has ever since been in a flourishing state. The place is well endowed, and has also a respectable house for the minister. The Sunday School was formed in October, 1819, and contains about one hundred children.

There is a church at Thaxted, under the care of the Rev. T. Byatt, and another at Old Samford, of which the Rev. T. Pettit is pastor.

1801.]

Church at Ilford.

CHURCH AT ILFORD.

ABOUT the year 1797 some zealous young men, from London, went to this place on a Lord's-day, and expounded the Scriptures in the open air, in the middle of the village. After this two rooms were hired for divine worship, but the number of hearers was small. On Mr. Pratt (one of the deacons) coming to reside in the neighbourhood, in 1799, the Rev. Mr. Sandys paid him a friendly visit, by whose assistance acceptable supplies were procured of the Baptist denomination. The congregation increased, and the preaching was made useful; and, in the year 1801, a small place of worship was erected and a church formed, consisting of eight members, six of whom had been previously baptized by Dr. Newman, at Bow, and the other two were received by dismission from the Baptist churches at Bow and Colchester. Mr. Sandys and Mr. Pewtress engaged in the formation of the church.

A larger place of worship soon became necessary, and in the year 1804 a place was erected, thirty-five feet by twenty-eight, which has since been enlarged by a gallery, and a large vestry and school-rooms, and will now contain about three hundred persons. A burying ground is attached to the chapel: its tenure is leasehold, and vested in the hands of trustees for the use of a congregation of Protestant dissenters called Calvinistic or Particular Baptists.

The first pastor was Mr. John Hutchings, who accepted the pastoral office in 1802, but was not publicly ordained. He left in 1805, and the church was for two or three years in a low condition. The present pastor, Mr. James Smith, was ordained April 26, 1808. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Hall and Cowell, of Ipswich; Shenston, Upton, and Keeble, of London; Newman, of Bow; and Parker, of Barking (Independent).

A Sunday School has been established about sixteen years. The average number of children has been about one hundred. Ilford Sunday School was the first in the neighbourhood, and has given rise to three others in the parish.

HAMPSHIRE.

CHURCH AT MEETING-HOUSE ALLEY,
PORTSEA.

THE persons who formed the first church at Portsea left a church at Alverstoke, near Gosport, in 1704, which was under the care of Mr. John Webbar, for the convenience of residence, being employed in his majesty's dock yard. The pastor choosing to stay at Gosport, continued there till his death, and his people dispersed. Mr. John Howe, who came from London in 1727, was their first pastor: he continued with them only a year, and then removed to Folkstone, in Kent: the church had now increased to about thirty or forty members. Mr. Joseph Curtis, from London, succeeded him, who stayed one year with them, and during that time baptized fourteen persons. Mr. John Mercer, from Tenterden, was also with them one year, and then removed to Newport, in the Isle of Wight. Mr. Jonathan Brown left at the end of another year, and removed to Christchurch. They then invited Mr. John Wilson, from London, who had promised to come; but on the very day he appointed to set out they received an account of his death.

In a manuscript written in the year 1777, it is said, "They then perceiving the disappointments of Providence, with regard to foreign ministers, began to look among themselves for assistance; and having two gifted brethren who were members of the church, John Lacey and Daniel Whitewood, they called on them to undertake carrying on the public ministry; who, thinking it their duty from the above considerations, accepted the call; and after solemn prayer and fasting Mr. Lacey was ordained their pastor in the year 1733, and Mr. Daniel Whitewood, his brother-in-law, to be his assistant and a deacon of the church. The church soon increased to about fifty members, and they enlarged their meeting-house at an expense of £180."

Mr. John Lacey was born May 22, 1700, at a village called Clatford, near Andover, in Hampshire. In the year 1704 his parents, who were religious people, removed to Portsea, and

1733.]

Mr. John Lacey.

joined themselves to the Baptists, at that time a very persecuted people. When very young he was remarked for his gravity and retentive memory, and he learned so rapidly that his school-mistress called him the parson. In the year Queen Anne died, when he was fourteen years of age, the Baptists were so much persecuted that he had not sufficient fortitude to bear the reproaches and sneers to which he was exposed for going to meeting, so that for two years he attended the parish church at Kingston, going with the prayer-book under his arm. At the end of that time his conscience so distressed him on account of his having left the Dissenters, that he returned to the congregation in Meeting-house Alley, and never after left it. It is not known at what time his conversion took place; but he did not join the church till after his marriage, which event took place in 1728. He, with several others, was baptized in a pond in the front of a farm-house at Eastney, in the island of Portsea, by the light of lanterns.*

After Mr. Lacey became pastor of the church a Sunday-evening lecture was commenced, and a conference meeting established on a Tuesday evening, when any one who chose left a text of Scripture to be considered and spoken from by the brethren the next week.

It should be recorded, to the honour of this good man, that he cheerfully received, and cordially encouraged, the celebrated George Whitefield and his coadjutors. They took up their residence with one of the members of the church, and every Wednesday evening had the free use of his pulpit: he himself always being one of his hearers. Some of the neighbouring ministers, and others, thought him wrong in encouraging the Methodists, intimating it would alienate the affections of his people from him. He replied, "Would to God that Jesus Christ was preached at the corner of every street, I would not care by whom."

At this time there was no evangelical preaching at Portsea in

* The Baptists at that period were so greatly annoyed that they baptized at night, chiefly in the pond above mentioned: at other times in the moat round the Portsmouth walls.

Mr. John Lacey.

[1781.]

the established church : assemblies and cards employed some of the clergymen. One of them who was thus engaged, on hearing the church bell ring for prayers, threw down his hand of cards, saying, " We will finish the game when I get back."

The preaching of the Methodists drew many to the Baptist meeting who were prejudiced against the Dissenters. Some of these being brought to love the gospel, and not finding it preached in any but the Baptist place, when the Itinerants left, united themselves to the Baptists. The meeting-house, in consequence of this increase, was, during Mr. Lacey's ministry, twice enlarged.

Those persons who were Independents at Portsea offered to become members ; but Mr. Lacey and his church, considering Baptism to be a Scriptural prerequisite for the Lord's Supper, refused to admit them : they however constantly attended on his ministry, excepting once a month, when they went to Gosport to commune with the Presbyterians.

For the accommodation of these Pædobaptists the Methodists at length resolved to build a Tabernacle. Mr. Lacey so heartily approved of this that he accompanied a Mr. Meredith to his own people to solicit subscriptions towards it.*

In the year 1777 the Baptist church consisted of one hundred and fifty members, and the congregation of about two hundred hearers. Mr. Lacey was pastor of the church nearly fifty years : he died April 13, 1781, within a few weeks of eighty-one years of age. " He was in person," says one of his daughters, " tall and graceful ; his countenance very grave, which caused some young persons to call him the centre of gravity. Notwithstanding this ' look severe ' his manners were pleasing and his conversation remarkably entertaining. He was well read in the history of the world, and especially in that of his own country : and from a correct observation during a long life he understood men and things as well as most men."

* This was built in Orange street. The church is now under the care of the Rev. John Griffin : their new place of worship will accommodate 2500 persons. There was no Episcopal chapel at that time. Mr. Lacey used to say pleasantly, " Well, let them build as many places as they will, ours will always be the mother church."

1781.]

Mr. John Lacey.

There is a handsome tablet erected in the meeting-house to his memory, which bears the following inscription :—

Nigh this monument
lie the remains of the REV. JOHN LACEY.
In him
the sound judicious divine
and
the acute penetrating philosopher
were happily united.
He possessed strong intellectual powers,
and these were constantly employed in the investigation of
the wonders of Creation and Redemption.
He was
near fifty years
the pastor of this church,
and was translated to the church triumphant
on the third day of April, 1781,
aged eighty-one years.

He published, in 1741, *Remarks on a Pamphlet, called a Conference about Infant Baptism*; and in the year 1747 a small book of *Divine Hymns*, which reached a second edition. In the year 1753 he published a *Translation of the "Bull Unigenitus,"* with its *Rise and Progress*, which had made a considerable stir in France about that time between the Jesuits and Jansenists. Also a work entitled *The Universal System*.*

Mr. Lacey left in writing a paper, entitled "*The Duty and Office of Deacons.*"

1. They are to help the church in its temporal concerns beyond what the pastor can or ought to do.
2. They are to take care of the church's stock, that it be carefully preserved and faithfully applied to the ends for which it is given.

* Of this work the following critique appeared in the *Monthly Review* for August, 1779 :—"The *Universal System* seems to be written by a sensible man, and to contain a sketch of an ingenious theory, calculated to remove some difficulties in the system of the universe, as explained both by Cartesian and Newtonian philosophers; and though the author's *reasons* may not be considered as *demonstrations*, yet the probability and ingenuity of some of his conjectures render this brief system worthy the attention of astronomers."

Mr. John Lacey.

[1781.]

3. They are to take care the contributions of the church are such as they ought to be; encourage the liberal, and in meekness reprove the strait handed, and show a good example themselves.
4. They are to take care of the "Table of the Lord," that the bread and wine be such as they ought to be.
5. They are to take care of the "minister's table," that he might want nothing according to the church's ability.
6. They are to take care of all Christ's poor, that they want nothing that is fitting for food and raiment, so far as the church is able to aid them.¹
7. They are to take care that neither covetousness or prodigality has any room in the church.
8. They are to visit the poor, and pray with them and for them when required.
9. They are to see to it that the rich have a liberal eye and a bountiful hand, and the poor a contented heart.
10. They must be examples of morality in their own persons, and to their wives and children.
11. They must neither be harsh to the poor, nor flattering to the rich, but wholly impartial to all.

The Church's Duty to their Deacons.

To have them in respect and honour—to pray for them that they may be enabled to perform their duty—to apply to them in every worldly dispute, when they cannot adjust it themselves—to abide by their determination, if possible, without troubling the church, and to leave all secular affairs belonging to the church to them.

N. B. The divine worship in all its parts is to be under the direction of the pastor.

A funeral sermon was preached for him by the Rev. Samuel Rowles, late of Colnbrook. This was printed, entitled, "The Christian Soldier waiting for his Crown."

Mr. Lacey had always had assistant ministers. These were all of them called to the ministry from among themselves. At the death of Mr. Whitewood, in 1759, the Lord raised up a

1781.]

Mr. Joseph Horsey.

Mr. Samuel Meadows as his successor. Soon after he was called to the ministry he lost his eyesight; but notwithstanding this affliction he was an excellent and useful preacher. He was a person of very respectable talents. He had been a considerable reader before he lost his sight, and afterwards his housekeeper read to him; and his memory being strong, he retained all that he heard. It has been said that he was mighty in the Scriptures, so that he seemed to carry a concordance in his head. He died in 1780.

He published several sermons. 1. A Funeral Sermon on the Death of Mr. Daniel Whitewood.—2. On Zerubbabel's Triumph.—3. The Garden of the Sluggard.—4. Comfort for Zion's Mourners.

After the death of Mr. Meadows, Mr. Joseph Horsey and Mr. Daniel Miall were called to the ministry. Mr. Horsey became an assistant to Mr. Lacey, and after his death, in 1781, succeeded him in the pastoral office.

Mr. Joseph Horsey was born at Crewkerne, in Somersetshire. His being apprenticed at Gosport led to his becoming a member of the church at Portsea. He possessed very acceptable talents, and was much esteemed both as a christian and a minister. He was for several years before his death one of the annual supplies at the Tabernacle, Bristol. Before he became pastor of the church at Portsea he supplied for some time at the church in the Adelphi, London. The people wished him to settle, but on asking him if he was fixed at Portsea, his answer to them was, "There I intend to live, and there I hope to die."

When he was proposed to succeed Mr. Lacey a great opposition was made to it, and one of the deacons tauntingly said, "If you undertake the pastoral office we will build such a meeting-house, and get such a minister, that you shall have nothing but the pews to preach to." They accordingly built a new place, but they never were able to get any minister to draw off the congregation from the old place. The person who thus spoke died a few years since without honour, and unregretted.

Mr. Horsey was invited to the pastoral office by a large majority, and was ordained May 15, 1782. He continued to labour, in connexion with his assistant, Mr. Daniel Miall, with

Mr. Joseph Horsey.

[1802.]

much success till 1801, when he was rendered incapable by a stroke of paralysis. He died in 1802. A tablet is erected in the meeting-house to his memory :—

In this aisle,
contiguous to this stone,
is deposited the corruptible part of the
REV. JOSEPH HORSEY,
who died September 4, A. D. 1802,
aged 65 years.

He was the useful and beloved pastor of this church
upwards of twenty years.

In his life was exemplified
the genuine influence of the doctrines of Christ,
which he so ably inculcated in his public ministrations.

The temper of his mind was a lively transcript
of His who said, Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.
Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation :
Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

A brief memoir of him was published by his son-in-law, Mr. John Shoveller. There is an excellent portrait of him from a miniature by his friend, Robert Boyer, Esq.

The Rev. Daniel Miall, after having assisted Mr. Horsey from the time of his becoming pastor, succeeded him in that office. He is a native of Portsea, or of its vicinity, and his parents were members of the General Baptist church in St. Thomas's street, Portsmouth, of which he was originally a member also. He commenced preaching, though a Baptist, among Mr. Wesley's people, and the founder of the Methodists showed him much attention, even after he had joined the Calvinistic Baptists. He is still living, and has lately resigned his pastoral charge. He is nearly eighty years of age. The Rev. Caleb Evans Birt, who had lately been united with him in the pastoral office, is now the sole pastor.

The meeting-house is a good sized place, capable of holding about eight hundred persons, and is freehold. There is a small endowment of about £3 a year. The writer of this recollects an aged deacon, named Norton, telling him that as he was cutting his leather (he was a shoemaker) another of the trustees said to him, " It is so small a sum it will be but of little loss to the church; we may as well divide it between us, as it will do us

1800.]

Church at Marylebone, near Portsea.

great good." Mr. Norton replied (putting his knife across his wrist) "I will cut my hand off first." It would have been well had all the trustees of public charities proved themselves equally scrupulous.

Another worthy deacon of this church was Mr. William Price, a respectable cutler and silversmith.* He had been brought up among the General Baptists at Portsmouth, who were swallowed up in the vortex of Arianism or Socinianism. He was baptized at St. Thomas's street meeting-house, but knew nothing of the power of religion in his heart. When about twenty-four years of age, going to hear the Rev. Mr. Ashburner, of Pool, at Meeting-house Alley, the sermon was blessed to his saving conversion, and he became a member of that church, and was afterwards called to the deacon's office, which he filled most usefully and reputably. He died in September, 1794. The writer of this, in 1808, married his widow, a most happy event for him and his family.†

The author, the late Mr. John Saffery, of Salisbury, and several others, were called to the ministry by this church.

CHURCH AT MARYLEBONE, NEAR PORTSEA.

THE people belonging to Meeting-house Alley built the meeting-house here in 1800. It was supplied by the pastor, Mr. Miall, and some of the members, as a branch of that church, until March 6, 1828, when a separate church was formed, consisting of twenty-one members. Mr. Charles Cakebread, one of the

* Mr. Price's great grandfather was a very godly man, who lived at Fareham. On account of his having embraced the principles of the Baptists, his father, a wealthy man, disinherited him, and left his money to support a school of boys and girls, who were to be clothed and educated. This charity (which it is understood has been much abused) is known in Fareham as PRICE'S SCHOOL.

† There is a tablet in the meeting-house erected to the memory of Mr. Price and three of his children. Since the above account was written the author has experienced the lamented loss of his excellent wife, January 22, 1829. She is buried, with her daughter, Miss Ann Price, and the author's former wife, and one of his children, in Bunhill-fields.

ministering brethren before alluded to, was ordained the pastor, April 4 following : the place has been enlarged, and the prospects are encouraging.

CHURCH AT WHITE'S ROW, PORTSEA.

THE meeting-house is a well-built freehold place, with a vestry about forty-five feet by thirty-four, which will hold four hundred and fifty persons. The church was formed April 25, 1782, by sixteen persons, who obtained their dismission from the first church, on account of being dissatisfied with the election of Mr. Horsey.

The history of this church is very little more than the settlements and removal of their pastors.

Name.	When ordained.	When removed.
Henry Dawson	Oct. 31, 1782	April 19, 1783.
Peter Edwards	April 6, 1785	became Pædobaptist 1794.
William Stone	Sept. 25, 1799	July 4, 1801.
J. J. Douglas	July 7, 1802	July 13, 1803.
John Penny	May 25, 1805	October 14, 1815.
William Hawkins . . .	June 13, 1816	March 17, 1821.
C. T. Mileham	Jan. 30, 1822	1825.

The Rev. Thomas Norris, a native of Wales, educated at Dr. Steadman's Academy, Bradford, is the present pastor.

Mr. John Bean, of Potter-street, near Harlow, and the late Mr. Hartnell, of Ipswich, were called to the ministry by this church. It is remarkable that no pastor has died with them.

EBENEZER CHAPEL, SOUTHSEA, NEAR PORTSMOUTH.

THIS is a very neat substantial freehold building, forty-eight feet by thirty-two, with a vestry ; it is still loaded with a debt of £1000. There is a large burying ground.*

* The author will perhaps be excused for noticing here, that in this ground his father, Mr. Charles Ivimey, lies interred. He had lived without any regard to religion till he was upwards of seventy years of

1811.]

Church at Forton, near Gosport.

The origin of the church is thus given by Mr. John Headden, its pastor in 1821. "In the year 1808 some of the members of the church in Meeting-house Alley thought it desirable that a place should be obtained that the gospel might be preached to the inhabitants of Southsea. They sought for a large room, but not being able to obtain one, they resolved to erect a small place of worship, and ten persons gave each ten guineas towards it. This was opened January 22, 1809, by the Rev. Daniel Miall, and the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, of London. The church was formed March 27, 1812. On March 12, 1813, Mr. John Headden was ordained the pastor, and Mr. John Clay was chosen assistant minister.

The first meeting-house proving too small, the present was built and opened September 13, 1815. There is a Sunday School of about two hundred children, and many active teachers. Mr. John Davis has been lately ordained co-pastor.

CHURCH AT FORTON, NEAR GOSPORT.

In the year 1807 three persons, members of the church in Meeting-house Alley, purchased a malthouse, and gave part of it for the purpose of preaching to the inhabitants, which were numerous on account of a large prison being filled with French prisoners. In 1811 a church was formed of twelve members. The meeting-house (which will hold about four hundred) was opened January 1, 1812. The next day Mr. Thomas Tilly, of Portsea, was ordained its pastor. The ministers engaged in these services were Messrs. Owers, of Southampton; Bulgin, of Poole; Penny, Neave, and Miall, of Portsea; and Ivimey, of London. In 1821 the church here had increased to fifty members. The Sunday School contained one hundred and thirty children, under the care of eighteen teachers; and two members were employed as village preachers. Mr. Tilly has been, and still is, a very useful minister.

age, and was then called by sovereign grace to "know the only true God and Jesus Christ." The author baptized his father and his mother together at Meeting-house Alley, in 1820. His father received the Lord's Supper only once, and died happy.

CHURCH AT LAKE LANE, NEAR PORTSEA.

THE origin of this church must be traced to the liberality of one of the deacons of Meeting-house Alley church, who, after the war, purchased a large barrack-house, and put it up in Lake Lane for a Sunday School. It was also used for preaching. After a few years the present handsome freehold place was erected by Mr. Thomas Tilly and Mr. John Clay (who had left Ebenezer Chapel), and a considerable church and congregation have been collected, of which the above-named ministers were the joint pastors.

The original place is used for a Sunday School of nearly eight hundred children.

This church was formed in 1820, and for a time was considered a branch of that at Forton. It is now considerably larger than the parent stock.

Mr. Tilly has resigned his office as joint pastor of the church here, and Mr. William Davies has been lately (1829) settled as pastor in connexion with Mr. Clay.

CHURCH AT WHITE SWAN FIELD, NEAR PORTSEA.

THIS meeting-house is a good building, which will hold about four hundred hearers. The church was formed about the year 1812, under the pastoral care of Mr. Richard Young, who still fills that office.

CHURCH AT CLARENCE STREET, NEAR PORTSEA.

THIS is a General Baptist church, which was formed of persons who separated, on account of its errors, from the people in St. Thomas's street, Portsmouth. Mr. John Kingsford, its first pastor, and his brother, Mr. George Kingsford,

1693.]

Church at Lymington.

his assistant, were both sound Trinitarians, and their ministry here was rendered very successful. They have been dead for several years, and Mr. Brand, a useful minister, has succeeded as pastor. The church is numerous, and the meeting-house has been repeatedly enlarged, till it will now contain seven or eight hundred people.

CHURCH AT DOCK-ROW, NEAR PORTSEA.

THE church now assembling here was first collected by Mr. Neave, who had visited Portsea under the patronage of Messrs. R. and J. Haldane, of Edinburgh, for the purpose of raising a pure Sandemanian community. Mr. Neave soon afterwards was baptized by Mr. John Penny, when the Messrs. Haldanes (who were not then Baptists) withdrew their connexion with him. Mr. Neave accordingly commenced a school, and so competent has he proved himself to be for that station, especially in regard to the higher branches of the mathematics, that the greater part of the "superiors" (as they were called) in the Dock Yard have been selected from his scholars.

Mr. Neave has been assisted, both in the church and in the school, by Mr. Arnott, who is also from Scotland.

CHURCH AT LYMINGTON.

THE Baptist church existed in this town prior to the year 1693: how much earlier is not known. In that year Mr. John Rumsey was ordained to the pastoral office. Mr. Benjamin Keach, of London, attended on the occasion. What was the success of his ministry, and when he died, are unknown.

Mr. Richard Chalks was ordained about 1705, and continued the pastor forty years. He died April 29, 1745.

Mr. John Voisey succeeded, and was pastor about twenty

Church at Lymington.

[1818.]

years: he died May 6, 1764. He is said to have been a very heavy, and by no means a useful, preacher.

After three years the church invited Mr. Joshua Thomas, a student under Mr. Hugh Evans, at Bristol, and a member of the church at Rhadwillan, Carmarthenshire. He came to them July 16, 1767. He was ordained August 24, 1768. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Sturch, of Newport; Kent, of Broughton; Hugh and Caleb Evans, of Bristol; and Phillips, of Salisbury.

As the increase of the congregation made it necessary to erect a new meeting-house, Mr. Thomas, the year after his settlement, left home to collect for it; but being, while on his journey, put into a damp bed, he was taken ill, and returning home on that account, he died at Portsmouth, June 5, 1769, about twenty-one years of age. Mr. Thomas's remains were taken for interment to the new meeting-house, which was not quite finished. The first service in it was that at the funeral of the beloved and deeply lamented young pastor. A very solemn and impressive sermon was preached by the Rev. John Lacey, of Portsea.

Mr. Isaac Stradling, a student at Bristol, and a member of the church at Wellington, succeeded in 1770, and on June 3, 1772, he was ordained: he continued pastor of the church nearly thirty-one years, and died March 28, 1803.

During the latter part of Mr. Stradling's ministry a separation took place in the church, and a small meeting-house, called Providence Chapel, was opened in the lane at the opposite side of the street to where the old meeting-house now stands. The first pastor was Mr. James Barnett, who had been called to the ministry by the first church at Portsea. He was ordained about 1781. He is still living, and is a respectable member of the church in Eagle-street, London. Mr. William Mursell succeeded him.

Mr. William Giles, of Dartmouth, came to Lymington, and was ordained over the parent church, April 4, 1809. In November, 1817, Mr. Giles left and removed to Chatham.

Mr. James Millard, from Whitchurch, the present pastor, succeeded July 24, 1818. The meeting-house has been lately considerably enlarged.

There is a considerable church and congregation, which has

1750.]

Churches at Lyndhurst and Newport.

been raised at Beaulieu Rails, in the New Forest, by the united labours of the Baptist ministers at Lymington. There is also a respectable church at Sway, in this forest, under the pastoral care of Mr. William Mursell. There are good meeting-houses in both places.

CHURCH AT LYNDHURST.

THERE is an old meeting-house here belonging to the General Baptists. Mr. Aldridge was settled here about 1782, and was for several years its pastor: since him Mr. Clark, who had been educated at the Independent College, at Homerton, but was baptized by Mr. Dore, at Mazepond, London. He has, within a few years, declared himself a Calvinist. There are some endowments belonging to this place. The cause of Christ has never flourished here, at least not in the recollection of any one now living.

CHURCH AT NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT.

THE old meeting-house, on which is now written "Unitarian Chapel," was built by General Baptists connected with those at Portsmouth. Mr. William Sturch, the first pastor, was a member of the church in St. Thomas's street. He was ordained in the year 1750, and Mr. Foot, of Bristol, gave an excellent evangelical charge on that occasion, which was printed. It is evident, from this circumstance, and from Mr. Sturch having been employed in the ordination of a Calvinistic minister at Lymington, that they were at that time a Trinitarian congregation, but which gradually declined into Socinianism. It is not necessary to give the succession of its ministers. Mr. Robert Aspland, who had been educated at the Bristol Academy, at the expense of the Particular Baptists, having relapsed into Socinianism, was at one time its pastor. It stands as a monument of the deteriorating and destructive influence of that antisciptural system.

There was a Particular Baptist church at Newport, about a

Church at Southampton.

[1795.]

century since, of which a Mr. Mercer was pastor: it has for many years become extinct.

Some few Particular Baptists began to meet for divine worship in a room in a tavern yard, about thirty-five years ago. Mr. Mursell (mentioned as pastor of the church at Sway) preached to them. The commodious meeting-house which they now occupy was built at an expense of £2000, while Mr. John Shoveller was pastor of the church. Mr. John Franks, lately employed by the Baptist Irish Society as an itinerant minister in Ireland, was its pastor for several years. The pastor at present, who has been lately ordained, is Mr. Eliel Davis.

CHURCH AT SOUTHAMPTON.

THERE was an old meeting-house belonging to the Baptists, out of the town, which, about the year 1795, had for many years been standing empty, the church and congregation having become extinct. About that time Mr. Edward Rowcliffe, who had been a General Baptist minister in London, began preaching at Southampton. A new meeting-house was soon erected, chiefly by the benevolence and influence of Mr. Joseph Saunders, of Whitchurch. After Mr. Rowcliffe had left, Mr. Saunders preached occasionally. Mr. Sands, formerly of the Adelphi meeting, London, preached a short time. Mr. Richard Owers, a student from Bristol, was the pastor several years.

The present pastor is Mr. B. H. Draper. The second new meeting-house, now used, is a very handsome commodious place.

CHURCH AT LOCKERLY.

THE learned and excellent Mr. James Fanch, of Romsey, published the following account of the origin of the church at Lockerly:—

1750.]

Church at Lockerly.

A Brief and Faithful Narrative of the Extraordinary Rise and Present State of a Protestant Dissenting Congregation of the Baptist Denomination at Lockerly, near Romsey, in Hants. Published in 1758, by the Rev. Mr. Fanch.

“The people which sat in darkness saw a great light: and to them which sat in the regions and shadow of death, light is sprung up.”
Matt. iv. 16.

“AT a small village in Hampshire, called Lockerly, about five miles from Romsey, in that county, there has been lately raised up, by a somewhat extraordinary hand of Providence, an entirely new and flourishing (though poor) congregation of Protestant dissenters of the Baptist denomination; several circumstances in whose case deserve particular attention, and are therefore laid before the serious reader.

“About the latter end of the year 1750 it pleased God (for the most part without any evident use of external means, and nearly at the same time) to awaken several of the people, and give them such a deep and lively sense of their sinful pollution and guilt, and the danger they were in as to another world, as greatly alarmed them, and put them upon the most solicitous inquiries about what they should do to be saved!

“They were all indeed before under a general profession of christianity, and most of them of the established church; but nevertheless, till the time above mentioned, grossly ignorant of their miserable condition as sinners against God, and the nature of that faith, repentance, and holiness, which the gospel requires, in order to the enjoyment of eternal life: and though in the main a sober, honest, industrious sort of people, yet too much addicted to country sports and revellings, and to the horrid and scandalous sin of profane swearing. Their convictions, however, put them upon a reformation of these evils, at least, to attempt it; and they attended upon the public worship of the church with much more care and diligence than they used to do, though with little more improvement either in christian knowledge or comfort, as they could perceive; so that the concern they were under about the one thing needful, instead of being removed, grew more and more distressing. This concern however they kept pretty much to themselves, till at length mutual observation,

Church at Lockerly.

[1751.]

and now and then some general hints, opened the way to a better acquaintance with each other's condition; which they soon improved, at first by occasional conversation, and then by setting apart some time weekly, for stated religious conference and prayer, which they managed with great decorum, and found of great use and advantage to them.

"The principal instrument (not one of themselves) which Providence had as yet made use of for their direction and encouragement in this case, was a pious young man of Romsey, who, having not long before taught them psalmody, was familiarly acquainted with them, and had a great interest in their esteem and confidence. To him therefore they could freely communicate their distresses; he as willingly assisted them by his advice and prayers, and, through the Divine blessing upon his honest endeavours, was a great means of bringing them acquainted with the way of God more perfectly.

"But as they grew in spiritual knowledge and experience of the grace of God, they found the ministry they had hitherto chiefly attended grew more and more insipid and unedifying; so that though their natural prejudices still ran high in favour of the established church itself, and they would gladly have continued in it, yet as the case stood with them in that place, and being (as one of them expressed it) quite starved out, they thought themselves obliged in conscience to seek the Bread of Life for their hungering souls where they could find it; and therefore, after a great deal of serious deliberation, and seeking of the Divine direction by prayer, they determined to go to the dissenters.

"The first dissenting minister they most frequently heard was Mr. Fanch, pastor of the Baptist church at Romsey. His ministry it pleased God to make eminently useful to them; and as they and their families could not enjoy the benefit of it at Romsey so constantly as they desired, because of the distance, he undertook, at their request, to supply them at Lockerly on the Lord's-day evening, after he had done the service of the day at home, and accordingly licensed a house for that purpose. This was in the year 1751. The consequence was, that sixteen of them were baptized at one time, upon a profession of their

1752.]

Church at Lockerly.

faith, &c. in the presence of a large congregation, at Broughton, a village in Hampshire, by Mr. Fanch. These things greatly alarmed their bigoted and profane neighbours, who endeavoured, all they could, to prejudice them against the dissenters, and even religion itself, sometimes by persuasion and argument, but chiefly by menaces and revilings, scoffs and ridicule, and all the engines of persecution in their power: but they were disappointed of their aims; for these simple honest people, though so lately acquainted with religion, were enabled, from the Scriptures and their own experience, to answer all the arguments brought against them with that readiness and presence of mind, and to bear all the persecuting violence with which they were treated with such truly primitive meekness and fortitude, as quite confounded their adversaries, and in the end greatly confirmed themselves in that way of serving God they had now chosen.

“Not long after their public profession, observing, from the more than ordinary seriousness of several of their neighbours, that their numbers were likely to increase, and being very desirous of enjoying all the means of grace among themselves, they proposed the forming themselves into a church, according to the order pointed out in the New Testament, which, after due consideration, and the advice of their christian friends, was accordingly done, with great solemnity, by the assistance of Mr. Fanch, in the year 1752. There are now, with some members since added, and a few occasional communicants, in all about thirty, and about as many more hearers, and but few of either originally dissenters.

“Thus, in a retired part of the country, and amidst a people, who, though they had the Bible open to them, and called themselves christians, were utterly destitute of the true and saving knowledge of Christ, and the vital influences of his religion, it has pleased God to cause the light of his special grace to shine, and the quickening influences of his blessed Spirit to operate, and thereby raise up a generation to serve him in spirit and truth; which, if we may judge from the present agreeable appearances, is likely to prove a means of preserving and handing down to posterity, in that place, the invaluable blessings of the gospel. May it encourage all who are painfully concerned for the declension of religion amongst us, not to sorrow

Church at Lockerly.

[1758.]

as without hope ; but, on the contrary, to plead with the greater earnestness at the throne of grace, that God would pour out his Spirit every where in greater abundance, and spread far and wide the savour of his truth and the light of his salvation. But as these good people are generally so poor, that they can but just provide for themselves and families the plain necessities of life by their daily labour, they lie at present under two very great discouragements, from which, without the assistance of their christian friends, they have no prospect of deliverance ; (viz.) in the first place a debt of about £30, which they were necessitated to contract, in purchasing and fitting up a place for the public worship of God ; the house, or rather cottage, in which they first met not being capable of containing near the number of people that usually assemble with them for that purpose. In the next place, the want of ability to provide for a constant and settled ministry amongst them, in consequence of which they are only occasionally supplied by Mr. Fanch, and some other neighbouring ministers, as their several avocations permit ; and they are not able to make, even to them, any thing like a competent acknowledgment for their trouble in this way of serving them.

“ Of the truth and faithfulness of this narrative, We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, are fully satisfied, and cannot but look upon the rise of a christian Society, so considerable, for their numbers, in such a place, in such a manner, and in such times of lamentable declension, as an extraordinary instance of the interposition of a gracious Providence in favour of real religion ; and as their case evidently requires, and we think deserves, assistance, we do hereby earnestly recommend it to the benevolent regards of all who wish well to the Redeemer’s kingdom, and the propagation of the saving knowledge of his gospel, and the practice of real piety and holiness amongst the poor.

“ Signed, { William Steele, Sen. } Broughton.
 { John Kent,
 { John Lacey, Portsmouth.
 { James Fanch, Romsey.”

This church has been supplied by a succession of pastors, and is at present under the care of Mr. T. Burnett.

1744.]

Church at Romsey.

CHURCH AT ROMSEY.

As to the origin of this church, I possess no information: but I have some idea that it grew out of the church at Southampton, and was, I believe, originally a branch of it. The first minister of whom I have heard was the Rev. James Fanch. He was a brother of the wife of the Rev. Daniel Turner, of Abingdon, and a man of considerable learning and excellent judgment, but not of popular pulpit talents. I have seen and perused many of his sermons in manuscript, which are fine specimens of sound divinity. One of them, it appears, was preached at Whitchurch May 26, 1744, and is founded upon Isaiah xlviii. 18, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

The concluding paragraph of this sermon will at once give a specimen of the preacher's style and manner; and also furnish some idea of the state of religion at that time among the churches. Mr. Fanch says, "By *righteousness*, in the text, I have before told you, may be understood increase of holiness in heart and life. There is a very general complaint of the sad decay of vital religion, and there is no need to question the justness of the complaint; but it were well for us if men were more industrious about a cure than complaining of the evil. How justly may God say to the professors of this lukewarm age, O that you had hearkened to my commandments; when I so frequently warned you not to 'forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is;'—when I so plainly told you, that if you did not watch against an evil heart of unbelief you would, before you were well aware of it, and by insensible degrees, depart from the living God;—when I charged you to forbear all malice, all guile, and evil speaking, and 'as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye might grow thereby;'—when I required you to 'exhort one another daily, lest any of you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' O that you had thus hearkened to my commandments! Then had you had more peace of conscience—more peace in churches—peace in families, and among christian neighbours; then had your

Church at St. Alban's.

[1720.]

fruits of righteousness abounded more and more ; then had your ' light so shone before men, that they might have seen your good works, and have glorified your Father which is in heaven.' What power had you gained over indwelling sin ! How had you been able to have bridled in your now unsanctified passions of anger, disdain, and resentment ! How have you, while you have spent your time in fruitless contentions about the smallest things, and been busy about things of very small concernment, neglected your watch against growing error and profaneness, the common and most deadly enemies of all piety, virtue, and religion ! But O that you would at last ' repent and do your first works, quickening the things that remain, which are ready to die ;' so may you still hope to have your ' peace as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea.' But if you will still go on frowardly in the way of your own hearts, ' beware,' says the Saviour, ' lest I spew you out of my mouth,' as something abominable both to God and man."

Mr. Fanch published several excellent practical works : he was the author of an ingenious piece, entitled " The Lord's Prayer, in a method partly borrowed from Bernard's Thesaurus Biblicus, with Scripture illustrations."

This excellent minister was buried at Lockerly. A plain stone has this couplet on it :—

" Can any good from these dead ashes rise ?
Yes, if they learn the wicked to be wise."

The church at Romsey is still existing.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

CHURCH AT ST. ALBAN'S.

THE following is in addition to the account given in a former part of our history :—

The meeting-house here was erected in 1720 : it was enlarged in 1759, and considerably altered and repaired in 1819. Its

1689.]

Church at New Mill.

dimensions are thirty-six feet by thirty-four, with three galleries. It will contain about four hundred persons. The tenure is freehold, and vested in the hands of trustees for the Baptist denomination.

Mr. Bennet (dismissed from the church at Coventry) was ordained pastor, October 4, 1752. Dr. Gill gave the charge, and Mr. Brine preached to the people. He resigned his office, February 3, 1757, removed to Chenies, raised the church there, and died 1761. Mr. John Gill (nephew of Dr. Gill and a member of his church) was ordained June 7, 1758. Dr. Gill, and Mr. Brine conducted the services. Mr. Gill died March 8, 1809, aged seventy-nine. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Sutcliff, of Olney, from 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Mr. John Carter, previously a deacon of the church, succeeded him: he was ordained January 1, 1812. The ministers engaged were Mr. Hunt, of Dunstable, and Messrs. Upton and Shenston, of London. Mr. Carter died October 5, 1816. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Hunt, of Tring, from Job. xiv. 4.

The next pastor was Mr. John Sargeant, who was ordained May 19, 1819. Messrs. Geard, of Hitchin, Upton, of London, and Chin, of Walworth, were the ministers engaged. Mr. Sargeant died July 29, 1820.

The present pastor is Mr. William Upton. The meeting-house is undergoing a considerable enlargement.

There is a Sunday school connected with the church, containing about ninety children.

CHURCH AT NEW MILL, NEAR TRING.

A CHURCH existed here in 1689, of which Mr. Richard Sutton was pastor, though the place of meeting at that time cannot be ascertained. Tradition says, it was a branch of the old church at Dunstable, Bedfordshire; that they frequently met in the neighbouring woods, and secret places, for worship, in consequence of the spirit of persecution which long raged here. About 1769 fifteen persons were formed into a regular church, with proper

Church at New Mill.

[1815.]

officers, by Mr. S. Medley, of Watford. Mr. J. King, formerly a member of the Independent church, at Chesham, under Mr. Spooner, but who had become a Baptist, was ordained pastor over this church. He was useful, but did not continue long with them. He was succeeded by Mr. Blaine, a member of Mr. Macgowan's, Devonshire Square, London.

The deed bears date December 14, 1699, when Robert Duncomb, yeoman of Tring, left £50 to be laid out, according to directions under his hand and seal. A cottage and premises were purchased at New Mill for £25, and the other £25 was employed in fitting up the place: the premises were made over to trustees, who appear to have been members. Soon after Mr. Blaine went to New Mill a meeting-house was built, thirty-one feet by twenty-five, towards which the church could then raise only £70: this house was repeatedly enlarged. The present place was erected in 1818, and opened October 14: its dimensions are sixty-two feet by forty, vestries included. It will seat about eight hundred persons, and is frequently filled. It cost about £1300, most of which has been raised by the church and congregation. Two cottages, with large stables and shed, are erected on the spot: it is about a mile from Tring, and the congregation is collected from a circuit of many miles. The new meeting-house was opened by Dr. Rippon, and Mr. Ivimey, of London, and Mr. Maslin, of Hertford.

Mr. King was ordained pastor about 1773: he soon after left, and is since dead. Mr. H. Blaine was ordained February 22, 1775. Messrs. Macgowan and Clark, of London, and Mr. James, of Hempstead, were engaged. Mr. Blaine died March 15, 1788. Mr. Pilley, of Luton, preached his funeral sermon. The next pastor was Mr. J. Clement, who was ordained July 17, 1788: he died February 17, 1812. Mr. Rees, a student from Stepney, succeeded. He was ordained February 9, 1813: his ministry was very useful in greatly increasing the church. He fell a martyr to his labours, and died May 5, 1815, at twenty-four years of age. He was succeeded by Mr. Clarabut, the present pastor. There is a Sunday school of about one hundred and fifty children.

1733.]

Church at Great Gransden.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

' CHURCH AT GREAT GRANSDEN.

THIS church was formed in 1733, of sixteen persons. Mr. Benjamin Dutton, who had come from Evershall, Northamptonshire, was chosen their pastor. At the church meeting, September 5, the pastor having stated the reasons why their communion would be confined to baptized persons, he and the members signed twelve articles of faith, as also the old covenant adopted in what were called Mr. Holcroft's Societies, of which this had been one. Mr. Rogers, of Northampton, and Mr. Rootsey, of Colchester, preached on the occasion.

The church increased under Mr. Dutton's ministry, so that it amounted to fifty members, and the congregation to two hundred or three hundred hearers. They built a meeting-house, and a minister's house, and a baptistry, in the year 1743. It does not appear how Mr. Dutton was connected with the churches in America; but he went in August, this year, to visit them, for the purpose of soliciting assistance towards the cause at Gransden. His applications were successful; but on coming home, as the ship had nearly reached the English coast, she was cast away, and he was lost, to the inexpressible grief of his people, leaving his widow, then about forty years of age.

In 1749 the church was reduced to thirty members, and chose Mr. David Evans, who came from Hook Norton, in Oxfordshire. He was a very acceptable minister; but he left them to settle at Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, in 1751. In 1758 they chose Mr. Timothy Keymer, who came from Worstead, Norfolk. He died in 1771. In the year 1774 the church was reduced to thirty members, and the congregation was not more than one hundred and fifty, or two hundred.

The widow of the excellent minister who lost his life at sea was the celebrated Mrs. Ann Dutton, who died in November, 1765. She published ten or twelve octavo volumes of Letters and Hymns. She seldom put more than the initials of her name, usually adding, "By one who has tasted that the Lord is

Church at Great Gransden.

[1774.]

gracious." Some of these were translated into Dutch by an English gentleman at Amsterdam, who sent Mrs. Dutton a set as a present.

The fame of her primitive piety, and particularly of her catholic charity, was spread every where, so that she received invitations to visit them from persons of all religious parties. The honourable Mr. Erskine seldom passed from Scotland to London, to attend parliament, without spending a day or two, in his way, with Mrs. Dutton; and in this conduct he was imitated by several persons of rank and piety. Her correspondence was most extensive, throughout England, Scotland, Wales, Holland, America, &c.; so that after her death several sacks full of letters were found, which were all burnt. It is said of her death, "It was more than serene, full of joy unspeakable in the prospect of sudden and immortal glory."

Mrs. Dutton lived in a plain and frugal manner, devoting all her time, and as much as she could spare of her income, to the service of religion. At her death she left, for the use of the succeeding pastors, houses and lands worth £25. 5s. per annum; also a small library for the pastor's use. Her funeral text was 1 Thess. iv. 13. The words, "So shall we be ever with the Lord," had greatly supported her mind in her last affliction. She was about sixty-seven years of age.

An account of this pious lady, with a portrait, was published by Dr. Gibbons, in his memoirs of eminently pious women, vol. ii. Dr. Gibbons says, "She appears from her writings to have been a woman of considerable abilities and great attainments in the divine life. The account she gives of herself was published in London, 1743; but where or when she died is to us uncertain." This we have been enabled to supply.

Mrs. Dutton was born at Northampton, and was brought up by her parents under the ministry of Mr. Hunt, a Pædobaptist. She was awakened under his ministry, and joined the church when she was fifteen years of age.

Mrs. Dutton mentions several remarkable providences; the first relating to her removal from Mr. Hunt's church in Northampton to another church in the same town, of which the late Mr. Moore was pastor. The Rev. John Moore was a Baptist, who died at Northampton, January 14, 1726.

1654.]

Churches at Dover and Folkstone.

KENT.

CHURCH AT DOVER.

THE General Baptist church at this place was, in the year 1654, under the care of Messrs. Richard Hobby and Edward Prescott, of Griston. It consisted, in 1667, of two hundred and forty-two members, residing at Sandwich, Deal, Folkstone, and Hythe. Mr. Prescott was very intimate with Captain Samuel Taverner, at that time governor of Deal Castle. He had been curate of Romford, in Essex, and was made captain of a troop of horse. He received his commission from Oliver Cromwell, as governor of Deal Castle, February 10, 1653. He resigned his commission, probably at the restoration, in 1660, and was baptized at Sandwich, 1663. He came to live at Dover in 1665, and was ordained elder of the church there October 13, 1681. He conducted a large business in the grocery line, and suffered much by persecution: he was often taken out of the pulpit, and once taken to prison; but his interest among persons of influence at court soon procured his liberty. He several times bore a bold and decided testimony to the truth of the gospel before the magistrates. He died May 4, 1796, aged seventy-six, and was buried in the Baptist burying ground at Dover, where there is a handsome stone erected to his memory. In the time of Mr. Taverner the church divided into three parts, at his recommendation. That at Dover had for its pastors Samuel Taverner and Richard Cannon; that at Sandwich and Deal, Messrs. Henry Brown and James Slaughter; and that at Folkstone and Hythe, Messrs. Anther and Adlin.

CHURCH AT FOLKSTONE.

ABOUT the year 1720 Mr. John Stace had occasional preaching in his parlour. About this period several persons went from hence to Canterbury, a distance of sixteen miles. In 1728 several

persons separated from the church at Hythe and Folkstone, among whom was a minister, Mr. G. Greene, on account of his denying the deity of Christ, his atonement and imputed righteousness, the efficacy of grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These united with Mr. Stace, before mentioned. In July, 1729, Mr. Stace gave the piece of ground in Mill-bay, on which the freehold meeting-house was erected, forty-five feet by twenty; and Mr. John Howe, who removed from Portsea, became the pastor of the church at Canterbury, which had branches at Folkstone and Shallows, near Margate.

The next year Mr. Howe removed to Folkstone, and presided over the united church for twenty years: he died in 1750. It is said in the church books, "He was an able minister of the New Testament, and great in divine truths."

After the death of Mr. Howe the people at Folkstone obtained their dismissal from Canterbury, on account of their great distance. This was granted, in a most friendly manner, August 16, 1750. Mr. Thomas Wanstall, from Ashford, supplied the church, as its pastor, from 1750 till his death, March 14, 1759.

Mr. Davis succeeded, and preached till Mr. Whitehead succeeded as pastor, in 1763; but, painful to state, the church was obliged to separate from him, on account of his immoral conduct. Mr. Gillard was pastor from 1776 till 1783, when he withdrew, with a few of the members, and formed a separate interest.

Mr. William Atwood was ordained October 18, 1785, and continued till 1816: he retired then to Farningham, and a few years after died. Mr. John Clark, a student from Stepney, was ordained November 27, 1816. He resigned the office a few years ago, but preaches in a neighbouring village. Mr. Joseph Belcher succeeded him, and is now the pastor.

CHURCH AT SHALLOWS, NEAR MARGATE.

THE other branch of the church at Canterbury was at a village called Shallows, where the meeting-house is still standing, situated between Margate and St. Peters.

1748.]

Churches at Tenterden and Seven Oaks.

While Mr. Jonathan Purchis lived, he preached also at Margate; but at his death the church at Shallows divided, one part meeting at St. Peter's, under the care of Mr. Cramp, the present pastor, and the other part, at Margate, chose Mr. George Atkinson. This latter excellent man was not successful in his ministry, although, a few years since, principally by the help of the London friends who had frequented Margate as a watering place, he accomplished the erection of a most handsome and commodious place of worship. The present pastor at Margate is Mr. Denham.

CHURCH AT TENTERDEN.

As early as the time of Charles II. in the year 1683, several Baptists here were fined, under the conventicle act: the persons whose houses were used for the meetings £20 each, and the hearers five shillings each. It is probable these were General Baptists, whose pastor was Mr. Blackmore.

There was a Particular Baptist church here in 1737. It is thought this church dissolved and united with that at Sandhurst, which, at the above date, was under the care of Mr. Thomas Potter.

There exists no account of the origin of the present church in Tenterden. Mr. John Lloyd, who died some years since at Colnbrook, was pastor there for several years: the pastor now is Mr. Joseph Exall. The church at Sandhurst is under the care of Mr. Joseph Gates, and is in a prosperous condition.

CHURCH AT SEVEN OAKS.

THE church now assembling here was formed at a neighbouring village, Bessel's Green, in 1748, by Mr. Michael Bligh. This worthy man had been called to preach by the old General Baptist church at that village. In the year 1746 his preaching on John iii. 7. gave great offence, and they proceeded, by a vote of censure, to silence him.

Church at Ashford.

[1653.]

Mr. Bligh and eight others withdrew, in consequence ; and for a time he preached to them in his own house, enduring much opposition. A meeting-house was erected at Seven Oaks, which was opened September 28, 1754. Dr. Samuel Stennett preached on the occasion. He was ordained October 1, 1754 : the other ters engaged were Messrs. Wallin, Thompson, jun. and S. Stennet.

Mr. Bligh's ministry was so useful, that a new and an enlarged meeting-house was built, and opened October 6, 1776 : its dimensions are thirty feet by twenty. Mr. Bligh laboured here honourably and successfully for forty years : he died October 22, 1794. The present house, built in 1815, is forty-five feet by thirty, and will contain four hundred persons.

Mr. Thomas Arnold was ordained here October 25, 1797, and continued till 1804, when he resigned the office. Mr. Thomas Shirley, the present pastor, was ordained August 1, 1810. The ministers employed were Messrs. Upton, Chin, and W. Shenston, of London.

The church called to the ministry Mr. John Davis, in 1758, who settled at Waltham Abbey ; Mr. Jonathan Purchis, in 1762, who settled at Margate ; Mr. Peter Bidwell, in 1814, who settled at Brastead ; and Mr. Henry Harris, in 1817.

There is a Sunday school at Seven Oaks, and another at Carter's Hill, containing one hundred and forty children. Teachers from the congregation also assist at three other schools.

There is a small church at Borough Green, established about 1810. A new meeting-house has been erected. The pastor's name is Mr. John Norris.

CHURCH AT ASHFORD.

THIS church appears, from ancient records, to have been formed in the year 1653, in which year there was a congregation of Baptists assembled here and at Wye, Naccolt, and places adjacent, who formed themselves into an organized church, and constituted eleven articles of their faith and practice.

1794.]

Church at Ashford.

In the year 1689 we find it a church of great note, for at that time it had four pastors, or elders—John Searles, sen., Thomas Jarman, George Elliss, and Henry Longley; and two deacons, Thomas Quested and John Searles, and a large number of members.

Also in the year 1706, on March 3, at an association of seven churches, this church sent twelve messengers—H. Longley, George Elliss, John Searles, Christopher Cooper, Abraham Flint, Sampson Pierce, sen., S. Pierce, jun., Benjamin Barham, Thomas Moore, &c.

In the year 1753 Mr. George Green was ordained pastor, and Messrs. Stephen Turner and Thomas Clover deacons, by Mr. John Exeter and Mr. Thomas Haffendon. We find unity and brotherly love, and a large increase, all the time of this good man.

On the 29th of October, 1754, Messrs. Benjamin Harrison, George Goldsack, and Samuel Wanstall, were ordained deacons, by prayer and laying on of hands, by the Rev. George Green and the Rev. Thomas Burch.

On the 21st of October, 1761, it pleased God to remove the valuable pastor by death. The church appointed a day of fasting and prayer the Wednesday after, to entreat the Lord that he would favour them with another minister. But it was not till 1766 that Mr. Brooks was ordained pastor, by imposition of hands, by the Rev. Dr. Stennett, Rev. B. Wallin, M. A. of London, and the Rev. W. Copping, of Sandhurst; also John Snatt and Thomas Purssord were ordained deacons at the same time.

Mr. Brooks continued pastor for some time; after that, the church was in an unsettled state for a long period.

Mr. Morgan was the next pastor; but he, being of an uncomfortable disposition, left in the year 1786.

Afterwards Mr. Cromwell was chosen pastor, and continued several years well respected among them; and during his stay several were added to their number; but an unhappy difference arose between him and Mr. —, and he left in the year 1794, after eleven years' stay. After him Mr. Read was invited unanimously, and chosen pastor. His first preaching was much approved, and he was apparently useful—many were added to

Churches at Crayford and Woolwich.

[1757.]

the church, several backsliders were restored, and they were in a happy state till an unpleasant affair had taken place, which necessitated them, as a church, to discard him as a minister and member.

The church, after seeking Divine direction, gave an unanimous invitation and call to Mr. White, to take the pastoral care and charge over them, which he accepted. Mr. James Payne is now the pastor.

CHURCH AT CRAYFORD.

THERE is a small meeting-house here, which will contain two hundred and fifty people. The church was formed Nov. 10, 1810. Mr. John Davies, who had formerly been the pastor both at Tewkesbury and Bampton, settled here, as the pastor, over a very small church, July 9, 1820. He is now laid aside. There is a Sunday school of about one hundred children.

Mr. Blakewell is the present pastor, and since his settlement the meeting-house has been greatly enlarged.

CHURCH AT WOOLWICH.

THE first Baptist church, situated in Hog lane, Woolwich, appears to have been formed October 22, 1757, when the members, who were but few in number, agreed to the following solemn covenant:—

“ We, who desire to walk in the fear of the Lord, do, through the assistance of his Holy Spirit, profess our deep and serious humiliation for all our transgressions; and do also solemnly, and in the presence of God, angels, and each other, under a sense of our own unworthiness, give ourselves up to the Lord, in a church state, according to the institution of Jesus Christ, whom we profess is our High Priest; to justify, sanctify, and save us, and also our Prophet to teach us; likewise our King and Lawgiver, to whom, as King of saints, we openly profess subjection, and desire

1757.]

Church at Woolwich.

to be conformed to all his holy laws and ordinances, for our growth, establishment, and consolation, that we may appear an holy spouse unto him, and to serve him in our generation according to the will of God, and wait for his second appearance, as our glorious Bridegroom, who has assured us, and whom we believe will come the second time without sin unto salvation, being fully satisfied in the way of church communion, according to the word and truth of grace, in some measure, upon one another's spirits, we do solemnly give up ourselves to one another, and join ourselves together in an holy union and fellowship, promising humbly to submit to the discipline of the gospel, and all holy duties required of a people in such a spiritual relation, according to the word of God; and also we agree, and promise, in the fear of God, to observe the following things, which we judge agreeable to the mind of Christ, and necessary for our peace and comfort as a church.

First, That we will, as much as in us lieth, strive to walk in all holiness, godliness, humility, and brotherly love, that we may render our communion pleasing to God, comfortable to ourselves, and lovely to the rest of God's people; and in order hereunto, we promise to watch over each other's conversation for good, and not suffer sin upon one another, so far as God shall discover it to us, and to stir up one another to love, and to good works, to warn, rebuke, and admonish one another with all meekness and long-suffering, according to the rules left us by Christ Jesus in that behalf.

Secondly, That we will, in a special manner, make conscience of praying for one another, and for the glory and increase of this church, and for the presence of God in it, and the pouring forth of his Spirit upon it, and his protection of it to his own glory; and that we will cleave to each other, and bear one another's burdens in all conditions, both outward and inward, as God shall enable us; and that we will bear, and forbear, with one another's weaknesses, failings, and infirmities, with much pity, tenderness, and compassion; and in all respects endeavour to behave towards each other according to the rules of Jesus Christ, and the order of the gospel, recorded in the written word.

“Thirdly, That we will avoid all causes, and causers, of

divisions, and endeavour to keep ‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;’ and that we will meet together on Lord’s-days and other times, as the Lord shall give us opportunity, to serve and glorify God in the way of his worship, to edify one another, and to contrive and seek the good and real advantage of this church.

“Fourthly, That all those that are, or shall be, convinced in their minds of Believers’ Baptism by immersion, shall submit thereunto; and those that are otherwise minded, either as to subject or mode, shall also walk according to the dictates of their own consciences; and that we will give no uneasiness or trouble to each other, or the church, about either the subject or mode of baptism, but leave each other, and exhort each other to act herein, as they shall judge most agreeable to the mind of Christ, believing, that as ‘we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we ought also to walk in him.’

“Fifthly, That we will abide by, and cleave to our pastor, and not desert him, or his ministrations, so long as he shall take the gospel for his guide and rule, and publish the doctrine of free grace, as the everlasting love of God to his elect; free redemption by Jesus Christ alone, from sin and wrath, and final perseverance of the saints in grace here, to glory hereafter, and his walk and conversation be according to godliness; but will, as God shall bless us with the good things of this world, according to our abilities, communicate thereof to him, believing, that God hath ordained, that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel; those, and all other duties found in the Word, we humbly submit unto, promising and purposing to perform them, not in our own strength, being conscious of our own weakness, but in the power and strength of the blessed God, whose we trust we are, and whom we desire for ever to serve; in witness whereof we have not only solemnly lift up our right hands to God, but do also subscribe our names, agreeable to the Word, which says, ‘One shall say, I am the Lord’s, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto God,’ and also, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten.’”

The minister who was the instrument of raising this church was Mr. Robert M’Gregor, who had been called to the ministry by

1761.]

Church at Woolwich.

the church in Eagle street, London (then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Andrew Gifford). Mr. M'Gregor having become the pastor, the church soon increased to nearly forty members. They now attempted to get a larger place of worship, and circulated the following appeal, to raise money for that purpose :

“ The humble request of the church of Christ meeting at Woolwich, in Hog lane, under the pastoral care of our well-beloved brother, Mr. Robert M'Gregor.

“ To all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and are willing to promote his cause and interest in the world, especially in a day when a declension of the things of God is so universal, and the beauty and glory of Zion is too apparently and sensibly departed :

“ Our present situation, as a church, may truly be said to be where Satan's seat is, yet the Lord has here also (as he had at Pergamos) a remnant according to the election of grace, as the effect of which, by hearing the gospel (we have reason to believe) they are inquiring the way to Zion, in earnest, with their faces thitherwards. Notwithstanding we have met with much opposition from Satan and his emissaries ; yet the Lord seems to be moving upon the face of the waters, and it has been matter of sorrow to us often, that our meeting-house cannot contain the people that would gladly attend with us, it being but ten feet wide by twenty long, and cannot be enlarged. We have frequently sought the Lord upon this account for direction, and we trust it has not been in vain, he having at length pointed us out a way for our buying a piece of ground, to build a larger meeting-house on, by the unanimous consent of the whole church, consisting of near forty persons. In consequence of this we have opened a subscription, and have subscribed ourselves to the extent of our power, not doubting but the Lord will incline the hearts of many of his children to lend their kind help and assistance, as it is his own cause in which we are concerned ; depending at the same time (while making use of this means) upon him to influence and move upon them, to contribute to so noble a work, which donations of the saints (should we enjoy, only for the end and purpose before specified) we trust that the mercy

Church at Loughborough.

[1815.]

will not only at the first be thankfully acknowledged, but be duly prized in time to come, and a sense of gratitude be impressed upon our minds, to them as the instruments, and particularly to the Lord as the moving cause. Leaving this therefore unto the guidance and wise management of our heavenly Father, we submit it to the careful inspection of his children, hoping it will meet with a favourable acceptance from them (as it will only be applied to the above purpose) which, if it does, will give us fresh occasion to remember them at the throne of grace; and beg that the Lord will bless them and theirs with peace and prosperity in this world, and with an unclouded sight and eternal enjoyment of him in that which is to come.

“Signed by us, in the name of the church, at our church meeting, held in Hog lane, at Woolwich, Lord’s-day, Feb. 22, 1761.

Stephen Waterlow,	} Deacons.”
Peter Wright,	
William Ambrose,	

The meeting-house is now of a very good size, and the congregation respectable.

There is another church of very considerable extent, of which Mr. Freeman is the pastor.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

CHURCH AT LOUGHBOROUGH.

THIS Particular Baptist church was formed by a secession of fourteen persons from the General Baptists in this town, on a difference of opinion relative to matters of doctrine and discipline. It was formed into a separate church November 14, 1815, the Rev. John Jarman presiding on the occasion, having also the sanction of the Rev. R. Hall. Mr. Capes removed from Gamlingay in January, 1816, and became its pastor August 27th, in the same year. In March, 1817, the present meeting-house was erected. Its dimensions are forty-five feet by thirty-nine; it will seat rather more than three hundred; built for, but without galleries, and vested in the hands of trustees for the use of the

1809.]

Churches at Neatshead and Ingham.

church and congregation. It is freehold. The church consisted, in 1822, of fifty members. There is a Sunday school of more than one hundred children.

There is a church at Sheepshead, over which the Rev. John Martin once presided. The present pastor is the Rev. Samuel Peters.

The General Baptist church is believed to be numerous. The Rev. W. Yeates, a missionary in Calcutta, was originally a member of this church.

NORFOLK.*

CHURCH AT NEATISHEAD.

THIRTEEN persons, who had received benefit by the preaching of the gospel in Neatishead, were baptized by Mr. W. Cooper, of Buxton, Norfolk, with a view to be formed into a baptized church. Eight of them were baptized on the 17th day of December, 1809, and five on the 18th day of February, 1810; and on the 3d of November, 1811, they were formed into a church.

The meeting-house was erected in the year 1811. Its dimensions are forty feet by twenty-five, exclusive of a vestry and stable. The ground on which it is built is copyhold—fine certain. It will contain about three hundred and fifty persons. It was opened on the 1st of October, 1811.

The first pastor was Mr. W. Spurgeon, who was ordained on the 14th of April, 1812. There is a Sunday school, which contains fifty-five children.

CHURCH AT INGHAM.

It is not known when the church at Ingham was formed; but it appears, from the information of some of the oldest members,

* The author is obliged to leave the history of the churches at Norwich till the Appendix.

Church at Denham.

[1784.]

they worshipped in a private house many years, and were Sabbatarians; that, on the removal of one of their ministers, disputes arose—some holding the observance of the first, and others the seventh, day of the week. The first account given is in the year 1747, when Mr. Joseph Stennett, the pastor, gave the meeting-house, the minister's dwelling-house, and about three acres of land, including the burial ground, to the use of the Baptist church assembling there, to the end of time, and vested the same in the hands of six trustees.

In 1813 the meeting-house was enlarged to nearly double its former size. The dimensions are now thirty-five feet by thirty-three inside, and having galleries, will seat about four hundred persons.

When Mr. Joseph Stennett left Ingham he was succeeded by Mr. Jonathan Brown, who died there. He was succeeded by Mr. Alexander Sparkhall, who left and was succeeded by Mr. John Hooker. He died July 13, 1810. The next pastor was Mr. Thomas Rikers, who was ordained March 6, 1811. The ministers engaged were Messrs. Kinghorn and Wilks, of Norwich, and Beard, of Worstead.

There is a Sunday school of about one hundred scholars.

CHURCH AT DENHAM.

THE church in this place was formed on the 4th of October, 1784, by the Rev. Mr. Trivett, of Worstead. In the year 1783 a few pious persons agreed to assemble for divine worship once on the Lord's-day, and they requested Mr. T. Wright, a neighbouring farmer, to expound the Scriptures to them. The labours of this man were made useful to several persons, three of whom were baptized during the year by Mr. Thomas Smith, and shortly afterwards another by Mr. Trivett. These four, together with Mr. Wright, their teacher, and two other persons, who obtained their dismissal for that purpose from the Baptist church in St. Mary's, Norwich, were united in church fellowship at the time, and by the minister above mentioned.

1717.]

Churches at Ellingham and Worstead.

In 1786 or 7, the meeting-house was erected. It was enlarged in 1815, and now measures thirty-three feet by thirty, will seat upwards of three hundred and fifty persons, and is, with the burial ground and stable adjoining, held in trust for the use of the Particular Baptists.

Mr. Thomas Wright was pastor for the first three years, but he was never ordained. He died July 16, 1787. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Needham, of Bristol. The next pastor was Mr. Robert Denham, from the church at Worstead, Norfolk. He was ordained October 1, 1789. Mr. Samuel Green was ordained July 26, 1797. He removed to Bluntisham, in Huntingdonshire, January, 1819. The present pastor is Mr. John Williams. He was ordained June 6, 1822.

CHURCH AT GREAT ELLINGHAM.

THIS church was formed September 29, 1699. The meeting-house was at first very small; it has since been enlarged. It is now forty-two feet long and eighteen wide, has two galleries, and will contain about three hundred persons.

Mr. Wright, the first pastor, died July 21, 1721. Mr. John Miller succeeded him: who left the church, May 31, 1733, on account of an unhappy division. Mr. Dunkhorn was the next pastor: he died March 25, 1767, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. Mr. John Sparkhall was his successor, and preached Mr. Dunkhorn's funeral sermon: he continued pastor twenty-one years, and died March 9, 1789. Mr. Hook, of Ingham, preached his funeral sermon. Mr. John Ewing, from Worstead, accepted the pastoral office July 20, 1790, in which he remained fourteen or fifteen years. He died February 1, 1805. The present pastor is Mr. C. Hatcher.

CHURCH AT WORSTEAD.

ON December 4, 1717, some persons met in Worstead and entered into church fellowship. They chose Mr. Richard Culley for

Church at Diss.

[1789.]

their pastor: how long he presided does not appear: the present family of Culley at Norwich are his descendants. Mr. Thomas Bennett succeeded him; but when chosen, or when removed, does not appear: his signature stands in the church book February 13, and November 21, 1734. Mr. Edward Trivett began to preach in 1740. He continued with them till his death, June 23, 1792, aged eighty years. During his ministry he baptized three hundred and ninety-one persons; eleven were called to the work of the ministry, of whom his son Zenas and J. W. Morris are still living. On April 9, 1794, James Freeman Beard was ordained: he left the church in 1811. While at Worstead he baptized one hundred and twenty-eight persons, and one brother was called to the work of the ministry. Mr. Richard Clark, from Shaldon, in Devonshire, was ordained May 18, 1813. The present number of members is one hundred and seventy-four.

The meeting-house was built in 1730. It was enlarged during Mr. Trivett's ministry, and again while Mr. Beard was pastor: it now holds five hundred persons. The meeting, and dwelling house, and a small burial ground, are freehold.

The following persons have been called to the ministry:—William Cole and Alexander Sparkhall, May, 1751; Timothy Keymer, November 2, 1753; Thomas Purdey, February 1, 1763; Jabez Brown, April 13, 1764; Zenas Trivett and Robert Gaze, July 17, 1766; John Webster Morris, August 13, 1784; Robert Dunham and Charles Farmery, May 21, 1788; and John Ewen, September 23, 1789.

CHURCH AT DISS.

In the year 1788, Mr. Charles Farmery was appointed by the church at Worstead, (under the pastoral care of Mr. E. Trivett) to go and preach the gospel wherever the providence of God might direct him. Hearing there were several churches in Buckinghamshire destitute of ministers, he set out, intending to visit them. On his way to Cam-

1800.]

Church at Diss.

bridge he preached at Shelfanger, where he was invited by some who heard him to preach at a dwelling-house at Roydon, a village adjoining Diss, to which he agreed. There were more people assembled on that occasion than the house would contain, among whom was an elderly man who occupied a larger house in the same village, which he offered Mr. Farmery to preach in. He accepted it, and preached in it on the following Lord's-day. His ministry was made useful, and he continued to preach there till a meeting-house was erected at Diss. In February, 1789, a piece of land was procured on a lease for ninety-nine years, and a meeting-house was begun: its dimensions are thirty-six feet by eighteen, and a gallery at each end. On the 9th of July the place was opened, and on the 12th eleven persons, who had been baptized by Mr. Farmery, were formed into a church by Mr. Trivett, of Worstead. On the 30th of September Mr. Farmery was ordained pastor. His labours were attended with great success, both in this place and the villages around it, so that it was found necessary to enlarge the meeting-house, in 1798, for which purpose an additional piece of land was purchased, and the house made (thirty-six feet) square, with an additional gallery, which made it capable of containing five hundred persons. It has since been again enlarged, to accommodate a Sunday school, which contains about two hundred and fifty children.

July 4, 1797. Sixty-seven persons were dismissed from this church to form a church at Stowmarket, Suffolk.

June 18, 1799 13 to form a church at Horham, ditto.

June 25, 1805 25 Stoke Ash, ditto.

Sept. 30, 1810 10 Eye, ditto.

June 10, 1810 33 Keninghall, Norfolk.

Nov. 4, 1819 18 Alborough, ditto.

Mr. Farmery died September 26, 1800, in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

Mr. Ward, who had been educated at the university of Cambridge, having left the Establishment, on account of embracing believers' baptism, succeeded Mr. Farmery. On December 25, 1800, he was received into the church; and his ministry was so well approved that he was called to the pastoral office. He was ordained June 24, 1801. Mr. Ward continued pastor till the

Church at Kettering.

[1696.

beginning of the year 1822, when he left the meeting-house on account of a change in his sentiments, he having renounced the belief of a Trinity of Divine persons in the Godhead; but did not leave till he had obtained a great majority of the church in favour of his present belief, who have erected another meeting-house in Diss.

The following persons have been called to the ministry by this church :—

- 1795 .. Mr. Rust, pastor at Stowmarket.
 1796 .. Samuel Green East Dereham, Norfolk.
 1797 .. John Bloomfield Stowmarket, some time minister at
 Rattlesden, Suffolk.
 1797 .. Samuel Pope Salhouse, Norfolk.
 1797 .. John Jefferies Downham.
 1800 .. Thomas Johnson Fakenham.
 1800 .. Robert Chapman, some time at Wymondham, Norfolk, since at
 Potton, Bedfordshire; then at Chesham, Bucks.
 1802 .. W. W. Simpson Eye, Suffolk.
 1813 .. George Eveleigh Waltham Abbey, Essex.
 1814 .. Edward Slater, dismissed in 1816 to Blandford street, London.
 1818 .. Robert Harvey, pastor at Alburgh, Norfolk, where a meeting-
 house was erected in 1822.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

CHURCH AT KETTERING.

THE following is a list of pastors of this church :—

1. Mr. William Wallis. He was an elder of the Independent church, but October 29, 1696, he and other members withdrew, and formed themselves into a Baptist church, of which he was the first pastor. Dr. Gill used to ascribe the means of his conversion to a sermon preached by him in 1709, from Gen. iii. 9. The doctor's father, Mr. Edward Gill, was one of those who seceded with Mr. Wallis. Mr. Wallis is supposed to have died about 1715. He was succeeded by his son,

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Mr. Andrew Fuller.

2. Mr. Thomas Wallis, who died in December, 1726. His church remained without a pastor till March 10, 1730, when, having united with the church of which the lately deceased Mr. John Wilson had been pastor, the united church chose for their pastor,

3. Mr. Robert Hanwell, or Henwell. He was a member of the Baptist church meeting in Great Eastcheap, London, under the pastoral care of Mr. John Noble. It appears, from the church book, that not a single member was added between May 6, 1744, and April 5, 1752. Upon the death of Mr. Hanwell,

4. Mr. John Brown succeeded, who was brother of Mr. Jonathan Brown, pastor of the Particular Baptist church at Battersea, and of Mr. Joseph Brown, pastor of the General Baptist church in Fair street, Horselydown. Mr. Brown was settled over the church July 9, 1752. An unhappy difference arising, Mr. Brown resigned, January 24, 1771, but built a new meeting-house, in which he preached till 1786, when he left Kettering, and went to live in London. Mr. Brown died at Lymington, in Hampshire, April 14, 1800. Between July 9, 1752, and January 24, 1751, seventy-five members were added. The church contained forty-nine members when he resigned. In the year 1761, Mr. John Satchell, the author of Thornton Abbey, seceded, and raised the second Baptist church, of which he was pastor till December, 1795, when that church was dissolved, and he joined the church under the care of Mr. Fuller.

5. Mr. George Moreton, November 20, 1771. He was a member of the Baptist church at Arnsby. He resigned in August, 1779.

6. Mr. Andrew Fuller, October 7, 1783, who died April 7, 1815. The number of members at his death was about one hundred and eighty.

The eminently useful Andrew Fuller was born February 6, 1754, at Wicken, a village in Cambridgeshire, seven miles from Ely. His father was a farmer, whom he assisted in his business. Some of his ancestors were eminent for piety, and had suffered in the cause of nonconformity. It appears that his first serious impressions were when he was about fourteen years of age. The account of his experience, as written by himself, may be read in

Mr. Andrew Fuller.

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his Memoirs. He was baptized when about sixteen, and joined the church at Soham: this was in the year 1770. He soon after began to preach, at the request of this small church, and ultimately became its pastor. He was ordained May 3, 1775, and continued in that office more than seven years.

The extreme caution which marked the conduct of Mr. Fuller in leaving Soham for the purpose of settling at Kettering, is highly creditable to his piety and self-denial. The church was very reluctant to part with him, and he as reluctant to leave them. They at last agreed to state their case to three ministers as arbitrators, and to abide by their decision. The arbitrators not agreeing in their judgment, Mr. Fuller and one of the deacons went to Mr. Robert Robinson, of Cambridge, who decided, after hearing the whole affair, and gave it as his opinion, "That Mr. Fuller ought to continue pastor of the church at Soham for one whole year from this day; and after that time, if it should appear that he can live on his income, that the people ought to abide by their proposal to raise Mr. Fuller's income to *twenty-six pounds* a year, which they had proposed, clear of all deductions."

Mr. Fuller removed to Kettering in October, 1782, but was not ordained till October 7, 1783. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, gave the charge from 2 Tim. iv. 22, and Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Ryland preached to the people from Acts xx. 31.

Soon after Mr. Fuller's settlement here he published a manuscript which he had prepared while at Soham, entitled, "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation: or the Obligations of Men fully to Credit, and cordially to Approve, whatever God makes known," &c. This not only brought him into great repute, but also exposed him to much painful opposition and laborious controversy.

The change which had taken place in the sentiments of Mr. Fuller on this subject was the circumstance (as he himself stated it to the writer) which ultimately led to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society at Kettering: which has been already related. He considered that neither himself nor his friends would have so deeply compassionated the condition of the heathen world had they retained the hyper-calvinistic scheme of

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Mr. Andrew Fuller.

doctrine, as to have undertaken such self-denying efforts to establish a Society to promote their conversion.

The gratuitous labours of Mr. Fuller in the service of the Society, of which he became the secretary, were indeed most abundant. The following statement by Dr. Ryland, including what I doubt not was said by Mr. Fuller to himself, is a just representation :—

“ In short, the whole weight of its concerns lay far more upon him than upon any man in England, and he cared for it night and day, and most disinterestedly laid himself out for its welfare, from its commencement to his death. While on a journey with a confidential friend, he once remarked, ‘ Friends talk to me about coadjutors and assistants, but I know not how it is, I find a difficulty. Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were thus deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, ‘ Well, I will go down if *you* will hold the rope.’ But before he went down (continued Mr. Fuller) he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us, at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, that ‘ while *we* lived, we should *never* let go the rope.’ You understand me. There was great responsibility attached to us who began the business : and so I find a difficulty.’

“ Accordingly his whole soul appeared to be engaged in these concerns, and he ‘ naturally cared’ for the welfare of our dear brethren abroad ; and from time to time communicated early intelligence to distant friends, respecting the progress of the missionaries, both in translating the scriptures, and spreading the knowledge of the gospel among the heathen.”

The writer of this had the honour and advantage of being intimately acquainted with Mr. Fuller during the last ten years of his very active and useful life, and knew much of his heart respecting the concerns of the Society, and his opinion of the best means for conducting it in the event of his death. It is well known he had a strong (and as the writer thinks) an unfounded prejudice against the business of the Society being managed in London ; he therefore, not long before his death, sent a letter to

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[1815.]

the missionaries at Serampore, which was read by several of those whose names were mentioned in it, recommending five persons with whom, in the event of his death, they should correspond, and on whom they might safely depend. To this advice it is probable the missionaries paid no regard, and events have since proved that such a plan of carrying on the Society would have been impracticable.

It was in September, 1814, that his last illness commenced; he was, however, so far recovered as to commence a journey, October 10, to the north of England on behalf of the mission; but was compelled, by a return of his feverish symptoms, to relinquish the attempt. It was soon after his return he thus wrote to the author, in a letter without date:—

“Brother Sutcliff’s last end was enviable: let mine be like his! Death has been making havoc of late among us. Yesterday I preached a funeral sermon, if so it might be called, for three of the members of our church, lately deceased. I feel as one who has the sentence of death in himself, and whose great concern it is, whether my religion will stand the test. Almost all my old friends are either dead or dying. Well, I have a hope that bears me up, and it is through grace. In reviewing my life I see much evil. God be merciful to me a sinner!”

The account of his last illness, and the state of his mind under it, is thus related by Dr. Ryland:—

“With regard to the state of his mind under his affliction, he was favoured with a good degree of calmness and resignation; but during the last month he became unable to converse, unless in detached sentences. He seemed, as it were, to have *done all* and *said all*, and to have nothing to do but to die. On the night of the 9th of April, he sat up in his bed, and spoke in a most affecting manner about some domestic concerns. When his mind was set at rest upon that subject, he did not discover any farther anxiety about it; but expressed himself as follows:—

“‘I feel satisfaction in the thought that my times are in the Lord’s hands. I have been importuning the Lord, that whether I live it may be to him, or whether I die, it may be to him. Flesh and heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.’”

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“ April the 11th, he said, ‘ Into thy hands I commit my spirit, my family, and my charge. I have done a little for God ; but all that I have done needs forgiveness. I trust alone in sovereign grace and mercy. I could be glad to be favoured with some lively hopes, before I depart hence. God, my supporter and my hope ! I would say, not my will, but thine be done.

‘ God is my soul’s eternal rock,
The strength of every saint.’

I am a poor sinner ; but my hope is in the Saviour of sinners.’

“ At another time, when speaking of the probable issue of his disease, he said, ‘ But I am not dismayed ; God is my soul’s eternal rock.’ And again, ‘ I know in whom I have believed : he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. I am a poor sinner, but he is a great Saviour.’

“ May the 2d. ‘ My God, my Saviour, my refuge, to thee I commit my spirit—take me to thyself ; bless those I leave behind.’

“ He said more than once, ‘ My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct.’ He would frequently say during his affliction, ‘ My mind is calm—no raptures ; no despondency.’

“ About nine days before his death, while attempting to get up, as he sat on the bedside, he said, ‘ All my feelings are sinking, dying feelings !’ Seeing his wife affected, he said, ‘ We shall meet again !’ and added, ‘ It will be well.’ He was then going into the warm bath, and while in it was a little refreshed. He observed to his medical attendant, who had just called in, ‘ I never before recollect to have had such depression of animal spirits, accompanied with such calmness of mind.’ He observed in reply, ‘ It was a glorious thing ;’ and spoke of it then and afterwards as a remarkable instance of the power of religion, in supporting the mind under such circumstances ; as he had known persons of the best regulated minds sink almost into despair under such disorders.

“ At another time, when something was said to him about resting, he answered, ‘ There is no rest for me.’ It was replied, ‘ There is a rest remains :’ to which he assented.

“ When under great anguish, he one day said to his son, ‘ All misery is concentrated in me !’—‘ Bodily misery, only, I suppose, father ?’—‘ Yes : nothing else.’

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"But the expression which he used to Mr. Blundell, of Northampton, was the most characteristic of any of which I have been informed—'My hope is such that I am not afraid to plunge into eternity!'

"On the Lord's-day morning on which he died, May 7, 1815, he said to his daughter Sarah, 'I wish I had strength enough . . . She asked, 'To do what?' He replied, 'To worship, child.'

"Soon after, his daughter Mary entering the room, as soon as he understood who it was, he said, 'Come, Mary, come and help me.' He was then raised up in bed, and for the last half-hour appeared to be engaged in prayer. His children surrounded his bed, listening attentively, to catch, if possible, the last words of their dying parent: but nothing could be distinctly heard, but, 'Help me!' Then, with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed upwards, he sunk back and expired."

Mr. Fuller's life has been written by his bosom friend, the late Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, and by another person, once his friend, Mr. Morris, formerly of Clipstone.

The writer thinks it right to record his sincere opinion respecting the abilities and usefulness of Mr. Fuller, that the denomination to which he conscientiously attached himself, and whose prosperity he invariably sought to promote, never had so distinguished an ornament. He might have been excelled by some few of its ministers in some separate and distinct excellence; but when taken in the whole of his character, he excelled all others. As a writer on the various important subjects he discussed, he holds a high, and, in regard to some of them, an unrivalled station.* As a preacher, he greatly excelled in the

* In addition to the work already mentioned, he published the following:—1. A Defence of a Treatise entitled, *The Gospel of Christ worthy of all Acceptation: Containing a Reply to Mr. Button's Remarks, and the Observations of Philanthropos.* 2. *The Reality and Efficacy of Divine Grace; with the Certain Success of Christ's Sufferings in Behalf of all who are finally saved: Containing Remarks upon the Observations of the Rev. Dan Taylor on Mr. Fuller's Reply to Philanthropos.* 3. *Remarks on Mr. Martin's Publication, in Five Letters to a Friend.* 4. *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and compared as to their Moral Tendency: in a Series of Letters, addressed to the Friends of Vital and Practical Religion.* 5. *Socinianism Indefensible on the Ground*

1815.]

Mr. Andrew Fuller.

simplicity of his compositions and in the correctness of his illustrations; but as the founder and conductor of the Baptist

of its Moral Tendency: Containing a Reply to Dr. Toulmin and Mr. Kentish. 6. The Gospel its own Witness: or, The Holy Nature and Divine Harmony of the Christian Religion, contrasted with the Immorality and Absurdity of Deism. 7. Letters to Mr. Vidler, on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation. 8. Dialogues, Letters, and Essays, on Various Subjects. 9. Strictures on Sandemanianism, in Twelve Letters to a Friend. 10. An Apology for the late Christian Missions to India. 11. Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel Pearce, A. M. of Birmingham, with Extracts from some of his most Interesting Letters. 12. Expository Discourses on the Book of Genesis, interspersed with Practical Reflections. 13. Expository Discourses on the Apocalypse, interspersed with Practical Reflections. 14. Sermons on Various Subjects. 15. The Backslider: or an Enquiry into the Nature, Symptoms, and Effects of Religious Declension, with the Means of Recovery. 16. The Nature and Importance of Walking by Faith. A Sermon before the Baptist Association at Nottingham, June 2, 1784. 17. The Qualifications and Encouragement of a Faithful Minister. An Ordination Sermon at Thorne, in Bedfordshire, October 31, 1787. 18. The Pernicious Consequences of Delay in Religious Concerns. A Sermon at Clipstone, April, 1791. 19. The Blessedness of the Dead who die in the Lord. A Sermon occasioned by the Death of Mr. Beeby Wallis, 1792. 20. The Importance of a Deep and Intimate Knowledge of Divine Truth. A Sermon before the Baptist Association at St. Alban's, June 1, 1796. 21. The Christian Doctrine of Rewards. A Sermon delivered at the Circus, Edinburgh, October 13, 1799. 22. God's Approbation of our Labours necessary to the Hope of Success. A Sermon at the Annual Meeting of the Bedford Union, May 6, 1801. 23. The Obedience of Churches to their Pastors. A Sermon at the Ordination of the Rev. Thomas Morgan, at Cannon Street, Birmingham. 1802. 24. Christian Patriotism: or the Duty of Religious People towards their Country. A Discourse delivered at Kettering, August 14, 1803. 25. Jesus the True Messiah. A Sermon at the Jews' Chapel, Spitalfields, Nov. 19, 1809. 26. The Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ. A Sermon delivered at the Funeral of the Rev. John Sutcliff, A. M. June 28, 1814. With a Brief Memoir of the Deceased. 27. The Great Question Answered. 28. A Vindication of Protestant Dissent from the Charges of the Rev. Thomas Robinson. 29. Expository Remarks on the Discipline of the Primitive Churches. Originally an Association Letter. 30. The Pastor's Address to his Christian Hearers; originally an Association Letter. Also several smaller pieces, and numerous papers in the religious periodical publications.

Church at Eye.

[1794.]

Missionary Society for twenty-two years, without any pecuniary remuneration, he will ever be remembered with esteem and veneration by all who feel an interest for the salvation of the heathen and the prosperity of the denomination.

Mr. John Keen Hall, who had been Mr. Fuller's assistant, was ordained pastor on the 8th of November, 1815: he is recently dead, and the church is now destitute.

SUFFOLK.

CHURCH AT EYE.

THE gospel was introduced into this borough town, and the church collected, by Mr. W. W. Simpson, its first pastor. He was originally a member of the established church, and about the year 1794 used to pass through Eye on his way to Debenham, to receive the sacrament from Mr. Hurn, the vicar of that parish. The town was then totally destitute of the gospel, and but one dissenter resided in it. After Mr. Simpson had joined the Baptist church at Diss the dark state of Eye greatly affected his heart, and he earnestly prayed that, if it were the Lord's will, he might be made the instrument of introducing the gospel into Eye. It was two years before he could procure any room suitable for preaching; but in July, 1802, he purchased some premises at a public auction, on the site of which the meeting-house was afterwards built. After the premises were registered, notice was given that the Rev. W. Ward, of Diss, would preach on the 4th of November. Illness preventing him, Mr. Simpson, who had been speaking before the church with a view to the public ministry, was himself the preacher, from 1 Tim. i. 15. There was much interruption, but the divine approbation was put on this attempt to extend the knowledge of the Saviour's love to sinners, by the conversion of a man who afterwards joined the church at Diss, and who became one of the first members at Eye.

About six years after this the meeting-house was built, which is secured in trust, and will hold five hundred people. There is also a good burying ground. The church was formed in August,

1758.]

Church at Ipswich.

1808, of thirteen members, ten of whom were dismissed from the church at Diss.

The meeting-house was opened October 4, 1810, and Mr. Simpson, on the same day, was ordained pastor of the church.

“ Our present number of members,” says Mr. Simpson, in 1822, “ is only fifty-four ; our house is filled with hearers, and I trust many are seriously inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.”

Mr. Simpson died lately, upwards of eighty years of age. He had for some time declined preaching. Mr. P. Saffery succeeded Mr. Simpson. Mr. C. T. Keene, formerly of Cork, was his successor, but he has lately removed to Westbury.

CHURCH AT IPSWICH.

THE Baptist church at Stoke Green, Ipswich, was first formed at Woolverstone, about five miles from Ipswich, and was the result of village-preaching for many years carried on by gifted brethren from the Baptist church at Colchester, in Essex (distant twenty miles). By these means a spirit of inquiry was excited, and seven or eight of the villagers were accustomed to assemble in their cottages, on the evenings of the sabbath, to read the Scriptures. In reading, their understandings became enlightened, and they were induced to think seriously of the ordinance of believer's baptism. Nothing particular however transpired, until the clergyman of a neighbouring parish neglected to attend the funeral of a child, which was consequently interred without the service. This circumstance caused a great stir in the neighbourhood, which eventually led to the formation of the church, in 1758.

The cottage in which they met for worship at Woolverstone was given by a friend, but not being legally conveyed, was afterwards claimed by the heir-at-law. In consequence, the church removed to Ipswich, in the year 1773, and purchased some tenements, which they converted into a meeting-house capable of containing two hundred and fifty persons. In 1796 it was enlarged, and again in 1802. In 1812 a third enlargement took place, at an expense of £1000, which was defrayed by the church

Church at Ipswich.

[1815.]

and congregation. The present building is about sixty feet by fifty, with galleries five seats deep; it will seat one thousand, and contain one thousand two hundred persons. It is generally well filled. The tenure is freehold, vested in trustees, and enrolled in chancery.

Since the formation of the church several others have arisen from it, viz. Wattisham, Grundesburgh, Walton, Harwich, and two other churches in the town.

The first pastor was Mr. Samuel Sowden, who went in the year 1758 from the church at Cannon-street, Birmingham. He was a man of eminent piety and considerable talent, and his labours were much blessed. He died about the year 1772, and was succeeded by Mr. George Hall, from Mr. Clarke's church, Unicorn-yard, London. His ordination took place in July, 1775: the ministers engaged were Messrs. Trivett, of Worstead, Norfolk; Macgowan, of Devonshire-square, London, and Clarke, his late pastor. Mr. Hall continued (as a tablet erected to his memory, on the right side of the pulpit, states) for thirty-four years to discharge his ministerial offices faithfully, affectionately, and successfully, and finished his course February 26, 1810.

The next pastor was Mr. James White, from Chenies, Buckinghamshire: he resigned in 1814, and became pastor of the church at Lowestoff, in this county. The next pastor was Mr. James Payne, who was received by dismissal from the church at Newport, Isle of Wight. He was ordained in November, 1815.

The present pastor is Mr. Sprigg, who removed to them from Swift's Alley, Dublin.

The following persons have been called to the work of the ministry:—

John Hitchcock, forty years pastor of the church at Wattisham.

Thomas Ridley, late pastor of Bury St. Edmunds.

John Keeble Blandford-st. London.

John Thompson pastor of Grundesburgh.

Abraham Cowell Walton.

James Smith Ilford.

In connexion with the church are Sabbath schools, containing nearly two hundred children; besides a day school for twelve girls, who are educated and partly clothed.

1790.]

Churches at Kingston and Guildford.

In the space of sixty years about eight hundred members have been admitted; two hundred of this number during Mr. Payne's ministry. The number in 1821 was about four hundred.

SURREY.

CHURCH AT KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES.

THIS church may be traced, as its origin, to the labours of Mr. Thomas Mabbott, who began to preach at Kingston the first Lord's-day in August, 1789. Mr. Mabbott, about a year afterwards, baptized at Mr. Upton's meeting-house, Grey's Walk, London, nine or ten persons, and these were formed into a church January 3, 1790.

The meeting-house, which is forty feet by twenty-two, and will contain about two hundred persons, was opened December 1, 1790. The Rev. John Martin, of London, and the Rev. W. Smith, preached on that occasion.

Mr. Isaac Phillemore was called to the ministry by this church, and was ordained over it as its pastor April 17, 1794. The Rev. Messrs. Smith, Swain, and Booth, of London, conducted the services.

Mr. Phillemore says, Dec. 17, 1821, "We have had to encounter many difficulties, "but having obtained help of God we continue to this day."

CHURCH AT GUILDFORD.

THE gospel was preached here by a Baptist itinerant minister, Mr. Thomas Collier, in the year 1646. I have no information when the church was formed, or when the meeting-house was erected. Its most respectable minister was Mr. Edward Chamberlain, who was the pastor for many years. He died October 11,

Churches at Godalming and Rye.

[1750.]

1792, aged sixty-nine years. His funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Rippon, who had been for several years acquainted with him, and who bore this honourable testimony to his character : “ The soundness of his faith, the simplicity of his manners, the sincerity of his friendship, and the savour of his devotion, rendered him, both in life and death, an ornament to the christian name, and an honour to the ministerial and pastoral functions.”

After him was a Mr. Thomas Woods, and in his time it was reduced almost to nothing. Some endowments belonging to them served to lull the sleepy to sleep ; and the sentiments of the minister and the discerning few tending strongly to Antinomianism, produced a death-like stupor, only disturbed occasionally by the snarl of the would-be critic and the frown of the real Antinomian.

Mr. Thomas Oughton was chosen their pastor a few years since.

CHURCH AT GODALMING.

THERE is a small General Baptist church here, which is entitled to part of the funds from which the church at Guildford receives its chief support. The estate was left to be applied to “ the Baptists in and about Guildford.”

SUSSEX.

CHURCH AT RYE.

THIS church was formed in November, 1750, by Mr. Charles Rogers, who was recommended to Rye by Mr. Benjamin Wallin, of London. He removed, in November, 1758, “ in consequence of the inability of the church to provide him a comfortable maintenance, and to pay off the debt occasioned by the erection of a

1692.]

Church at Warwick.

new meeting-house." This was erected in 1754: its dimensions are thirty feet by twenty-five.

The names of its pastors, their settlements and removals, form the principal events in the history of this church.

Name.	When ordained.	When removed.
Charles Rogers ..	November, 1750	November, 1758.
— Edwards ...	— 1758	removed to America, 1759.
Christopher Hall .	— 1760 ————	— 1762.
Mr. Thomas Purdy	July, 1767	February, 1817
James Rees, as co-pastor —	1811	September, 1820.

Mr. Purdy, objecting to Mr. Rees being the co-pastor, resigned his office when that event took place: he resided in the house belonging to the pastor notwithstanding, rent free, till his death.

Mr. Andrew Smith, ordained August 14, 1821, is the present pastor, whose ministry has greatly increased the church and congregation.

This church has sent into the ministry Mr. James Brown, in 1771, late of Harlow; and Mr. William Vidler, afterwards of Battle, in 1780. He became a Universalist and Socinian, and died in London.

WARWICKSHIRE.

CHURCH AT WARWICK.

It is mentioned by Calamy, vol. ii. p. 579, that "this church probably originated in the labours of the Rev. Paul Frewen, who was ejected from Kempley, in the county of Gloucester, and who was afterwards minister to the congregation at Warwick, a good preacher and a very popular man." In 1689 he attended the general assembly as the messenger of this church, and probably died soon after, as Mr. John Boyer attended as the *minister* in 1692.

When the above article was written, the writer of this had not

Church at Warwick.

[1692.]

become acquainted with the fact, that in 1681 a Mr. James Cook, the elder, was pastor of the church at Warwick. As it is not said by Calamy *at what time* Mr. Frewen became the minister at Warwick, it is likely he was the successor of this Mr. Cook some time before the Revolution in 1688.

I have no particulars respecting Mr. James Cook ; but during his ministry at Warwick one of his people, Mr. Thomas Hurd, by trade a tailor, and residing in Castle street, became a liberal benefactor of this church, by will ; it bears date March 7, 1681. In it he bequeathed the rents of several houses towards the support of the ministry ; and his garden to be used as a burying ground by the congregation. Out of the rent of his house in Castle street he directed that twelve shillings should be paid on the 20th of September, “ to be laid out in purchasing three bibles for such three poor children as the trustees might select : to be presented to them on THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER, YEARLY.” He also left “ two pieces of plate, a silver tankard and silver cup, to be used at the Lord’s table.” The preamble to the last will and testament of this benevolent man is worthy of being copied, as it doubtless describes his sentiments and character as a humble disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ :—“ I commit into thy hands my soul and body, to be at thy disposal and pleasure, who art the God of the spirits of all flesh : the Creator of all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible : the only wise, holy, precious, and merciful Lord God, blessed for ever : the God and father of my dear Lord and blessed Redeemer, the Lord my righteousness, by whom alone I look for justification through his blood and merits only, which hath made satisfaction to God the Father for all my sins ; renouncing all my own righteousness by works or duties that I have done ; relying only on the free grace and mercy of God, revealed in and through Jesus Christ our Lord, I resign up my soul and body into the hands of this faithful Creator, believing nothing concerning life and salvation, and the worship of God, that is not contained in the Scriptures called the Old and New Testaments ; renouncing all the doctrines and traditions that hath not a foundation in this word of God. Thus having given up my soul and body to the Lord, of whom I received it, I do now set my house in order, knowing I shall

1737.]

Church at Birmingham.

shortly put off this earthly house or tabernacle, and go to the dust, from whence I was taken."

Dr. Philip James was pastor of this church; and after several others the celebrated John Ryland, A. M.

CHURCH AT BIRMINGHAM.

THERE were societies of Baptists at several of the neighbouring towns in the time of the commonwealth, and it is very probable that some of the members of these and other Baptist churches at that time resided in Birmingham.

That the Baptists set up public worship, and were supplied by persons from Coventry and other places, at an early period, is certain: it is evident, also, that they were then chiefly, if not entirely, of the General Baptist denomination, and continued such for several succeeding years.

A few members of the Particular Baptist church at Bromsgrove lived at Birmingham as early as 1715, though there is no evidence of their uniting for distinct worship, much less as a church, for a long season.

Being increased, however, by an influx of members from different churches, they at length determined to form a church of their own denomination. To this they were encouraged by neighbouring ministers; and, on the 24th of August, 1737, seventeen persons, viz. seven men and ten women, were united in christian fellowship. Messrs. George Yarnold, of Bromsgrove; John Overbury, of Alcester, Jacob Mower, of Bengworth; Nathaniel Overbury, of Tetbury; Joel Streetton, of Foxton; Edmund Belsher, of Henley Arden, and Mr. Marston, a General Baptist minister of Birmingham, assisted in the work of the day.

Their place of worship, at that time, was a room in a yard in High street. In 1738 the first meeting-house in Cannon street was built, but the affairs of the church seem to have been in a very low state for a considerable time; an account is preserved of their different supplies, but it was nearly fourteen years before they were favoured with a regular minister. Indeed, so greatly were they discouraged by the opposition and difficulties they had

Church at Birmingham.

[1799.]

to encounter, that, at a church meeting, held in 1745, it was agreed to dissolve their union, and to unite themselves to neighbouring churches, unless some favourable change should speedily occur. They still, however, kept united, and appear to have acted with much prudence, when, in the beginning of the year 1749, Mr. James Morley, from Nottingham, came among them. He was ordained in June, 1751, and became the first pastor of the church. His stay at Birmingham was short: having changed his sentiments on Baptism he removed to an Independent church at Painswick.

The next pastor was Mr. James Turner, from the church at Bacup, Lancashire, of which Mr. Henry Lord was pastor: he was ordained in June, 1755, and presided over the church with great acceptance till his death, which took place in 1780.

It is observed above, that the General Baptists preached in Birmingham a considerable time before the church in Cannon street was formed. They had a meeting-house built in Freeman street, where they met for worship for several years; their minister's name was Marston, the same person probably who was present at the formation of the church in Cannon street, in 1737. Owing to some contention, the place was shut up, and is since become private property. Mr. Marston preached in his own house till about the period of Mr. Turner's settlement, when he removed to Worcester, and the connexion gradually dissolved.

The hearers at Cannon street were so increased in 1763, that it became necessary to extend the meeting-house, and it was enlarged again in 1780. †

Mr. Turner's successor was Mr. Henry Taylor, originally from Crawshey Booth, Lancashire, but last from Chester. He was ordained in April, 1782, and in May, 1788, the relation betwixt him and the church was dissolved by mutual consent, in consequence of his having again embraced the doctrinal sentiments professed by Mr. Wesley's connexion, with whom he had been formerly united.

Mr. Taylor was succeeded by Mr. Samuel Pearce, from the church at Plymouth, then under the co-pastorship of Messrs. Gibbs and Birt. He was ordained on the 18th of August, 1790, and on the 10th of October, 1799, was called to his "Father's

1814.]

Church at Birmingham.

House." So great was the success attending the labours of this eminent servant of Jesus Christ, that no less than three hundred and thirty-five persons were added to the church during his ministry.

He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Morgan, from Moleston, Pembrokeshire, who was ordained in June, 1802, and resigned his office July, 1811, his health being so impaired as to render him incapable of fulfilling its duties.

The old meeting-house, notwithstanding its enlargement at different times, had been found inconvenient for some years past, owing to the great increase of both the church and congregation. It was taken down in 1804, and the present house, seventy-two feet by forty-five, within the walls, with three spacious and lofty school rooms, in which about six hundred children, and upwards of one hundred adults, are instructed, was erected in its stead: the house was opened July 16, 1806.

The next pastor was Mr. Isaiah Birt, from Plymouth Dock, alluded to above. He entered on his office January 1, 1814, and his union with the church was recognized on the 28th of February following. The lecture on Lord's-day afternoon was preached by Mr. Edward Elliot, from London. The number of members in 1821 was four hundred and twenty-five.

In addition to the above sketch, it may be observed there are two other churches of the same faith and order now in Birmingham, which have emanated from Cannon street. The first was formed in 1785. Five members, who were dismissed at their own request, opened a place of worship, and being joined by about twenty persons, who were baptized that year, a church was formed. In 1786 their present meeting-house, in Bond street, was opened. Mr. Edward Edmonds, one of the five above mentioned, was their pastor from the commencement. In the course of the year 1820, Mr. Morgan, late of Cannon street, was engaged to assist Mr. Edmonds in the ministry.

A commodious meeting-house, situate in New Hall street (built originally for the Swedenborgians) being unoccupied, early in 1814, fifty-two persons were dismissed from Cannon street, who were formed into a distinct church, and the above place was opened by Mr. Birt, on their behalf, March 23, in the

Church at Upton-upon-Severn.

[1816.]

same year. Mr. William Hutchins, from London, was ordained the pastor of this church May 22, 1816.

Since the above was written Mr. Edmonds has died, Mr. Hutchins has removed, and Mr. Birt has resigned his office. The church in Cannon street is supplied with a pastor, Mr. Swan, who lately returned from Serampore. Mr. Poole is pastor of that in New Hall street.

The name of Mr. Samuel Pearce must not be lightly passed over. He was one of the most eminent promoters of the Baptist Missionary Society at the time of its first establishment. He was born at Plymouth, and at an early age was baptized by Mr. Birt (then co-pastor with Mr. Gibbs) and became a member of that church. He studied the usual period at Bristol under Dr. Caleb Evans, and when he left the academy settled, as before mentioned, with the church in Cannon street, Birmingham. He was a most animated and almost seraphic preacher. He was very desirous of following Mr. (now Dr.) Carey to India; but was restrained by the advice of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, on account of his usefulness in collecting for its funds at home. But his usefulness was of short duration, as he was laid by for many months before his death, which happened in the thirty-third year of his age. His very interesting memoirs, published by his friend, Mr. Andrew Fuller, give a fair character of this extraordinary minister of Christ.

Mr. Pearce published several single sermons. One of these, in condemnation of the test laws, is thought to display considerable ability. Some beautiful hymns, composed by him, may be read in Dr. Rippon's Selection. Two of his children, a son and daughter, now reside in Calcutta, engaged in missionary labours.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

CHURCH AT UPTON-UPON-SEVERN.

THIS is an old church, of which no account has been preserved. Mr. Benjamin Francis, of Horsley, wrote an elegy on

1787.]

Church at Astwood.

the death of the Rev. Philip Jones, one of its worthy pastors, from which the following lines are extracted :—

“ O could the muse delineate to the truth
His fair deportment from his tender youth,
How amiable would his whole life appear,
How pure his mind, how heavenly, how sincere !
In vain my pencil would attempt to paint
Each beauteous feature of the lovely saint ;
And could I draw his charming picture true,
You’d think an angel, not a man, I drew.
Celestial love within his bosom glow’d,
And from his lips celestial tidings flow’d ;
Discretion still adorn’d his honour’d face,
Around his path shone every heavenly grace.
In him calm patience, lowliness of mind,
Faith, knowledge, zeal, and charity combined ;
His conversation, spirit, and pursuit
Breathed fragrance round like choice Arabian fruit.
Instruction dwelt on his engaging tongue,
Wise were his counsels, and his reasonings strong ;
In paths of peace his feet were ever found,
His hoary head with righteousness was crown’d.
He, happy man, received a heavenly birth,
And lived a stranger on polluted earth ;
From Pisgah oft beheld the promised land,
And longed to tread it at his God’s command.
Employed with power for his Redeemer’s praise,
He shone in every sphere with unabating rays,
And closed with honour his laborious days.”

CHURCH AT ASTWOOD.

A SMALL room was built at Astwood in the spring of 1787 (part of the present meeting-house), and opened as a Sunday school, when a great many young persons came forward, desirous of attending, and who continued till many of them had learnt to read well, and a different turn seemed to have been given to their minds, as, instead of spending the sabbath in idle sports, as before, they were willing to attend upon the things that were

Church at Astwood.

[1812.]

calculated for their moral and spiritual improvement. In August, the same year, preaching was begun in this place, to further the work, and to convey religious knowledge in a more extensive way. The first sermon was preached by Mr. Spenser, from John iv. 24—"God is a Spirit," &c.; a great many people attended, and on the whole were very orderly, though the room could not hold nearly all of them: preaching was continued as often as convenient, and ministers could be had, which, for the most part, was once a month on Lord's-day morning. The room being too small, it was enlarged, and was then generally filled; and it was hoped some good was going on, as the people attended for the most part in a decent manner, and some with seriousness and in a regular way; but the numbers varied at times. There was at least an outward reformation in the neighbourhood; the Lord's-day was better kept, and vice, if practised, did not dare to show herself openly.

In 1798 Mr. Smith came to Alcester, and began to preach here regularly once a fortnight, and sometimes oftener; and the number of hearers increasing, it was found necessary to enlarge the house again, which was done in 1799.

On April 12, 1803, the meeting-house and two dwelling houses adjoining, with the garden and appurtenances, and also the burial ground, now considerably enlarged (which had before been the property of an individual, Mr. W. Hemming), were given, and, by proper indenture enrolled, vested in the hands of trustees and their successors for carrying on the worship of God and the support of the ministry of the gospel in this place for ever; and also two pieces of land (about an acre and half) in the neighbourhood, bought with money given by two female friends, who would not allow their names to be mentioned.

Mr. Smith removed from Alcester, and became pastor of the church at Astwood in 1812. There is a Sunday school of one hundred and sixty children.

1764.]

Church at Bewdley.

CHURCH AT BEWDLEY.

THE meeting-house was built in 1764. Mrs. S. Seward, a great benefactress to several Baptist churches, who resided at Bewdley, her native place, after leaving London, had left £100 for that purpose. There is also a small house for the minister, and a burying ground.

The Baptist church here was originally formed of persons who heard, and had been baptized by, Mr. John Tombes, while he was the parish Presbyterian minister, about 1649. This society continued till the restoration in 1660, and was most likely, after Mr. Tombes went to Leominster, under the care of Mr. John Eccles, afterwards of Bromsgrove. It is probable he superintended both churches till the Revolution, in 1688.

There was a Mr. Clark at Bewdley about 1700; a Mr. Thompson succeeded him. In 1718 he was excluded, on account of his having preached the Arian hypothesis respecting the person of the Son of God, and in 1720 removed to South Collingham, near Newark.

Mr. James Kettilby, a member of the church, about twenty-years of age, succeeded him, and was ordained May 20, 1725.

It is said Mr. K. was a "sound, solid, judicious minister; and though not very popular, he was a laborious, humble, worthy man." He followed a business, as the people were not able to support him in comfort. He was often much dejected, on account of his little success in the ministry. About 1740 the church was reduced very low, but afterwards there was a revival; four persons were converted under one sermon. He died in 1767. He was pastor forty-two years. Mr. John Blacksaw was ordained in 1774, and in 1779 left to go to Leicester.

Mr. John Pyne, in 1781, left Shrewsbury and settled here; when he left Bewdley he went to Bristol. Mr. George Williams was ordained November 5, 1794; he left, and returned to Wolverhampton in 1799.

The present minister, Mr. George Brooks, a member of the church, was ordained June 22, 1813. The church is very small

Church at Silver-street, Worcester.

[1658.]

CHURCH AT KIDDERMINSTER.

THIS place is about three miles from Bewdley. Mr. Thomas Griffin, a member of that church, had preached for some time occasionally at Kidderminster, and in the year 1809 a small church was formed, and Mr. Griffin became the pastor.

CHURCH AT SILVER-STREET, WORCESTER.

MR. THOMAS FECKNAM was the first minister of this church. In the year 1658 there were thirty-nine members, eighteen men and twenty-one women. This was a respectable church at that time. Mr. Fecknam began to preach very young, so that he was called "the preaching Baptist boy." He was in the ministry upwards of fifty years, six of which he was in prison. A great character is given him in an elegy composed on his death, which happened October, 1695, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Mr. Elisha Hathaway was ordained pastor of this church on the 7th of February, 1702. He was a very acceptable and useful minister of the gospel. The records name above seventy members, who were added in his time. On his death bed he praised God that he had no cloud on his spirit or doubt in his mind about his future happiness. He was teacher and pastor of the church and congregation forty years. He fell asleep in Jesus on the 17th of September, 1714, aged eighty-one years.

Mr. Hathaway was succeeded by Mr. Isaac Poynting, who came from near Frome, Somersetshire.

Mr. Isaac Poynting died on the 5th of May, 1740, aged sixty-three. He was pastor of this church twenty-five years, and was succeeded by his son, Mr. John Poynting. There is a biographical account of him in the Baptist Register, vol. i. p. 5—10.

After the death of Mr. John Poynting the church was destitute of a pastor from October 6, 1791, till the settlement of Mr. William Belsher, December 7, 1796.

At the time of Mr. Belsher's settling among them the number of members was twenty-four; by the blessing of God on his word,

1769.]

Church at Westmancoate.

they soon amounted to ninety-six, notwithstanding dismissals to other churches, and frequent visitations by death.

The present place of worship was built in the year 1797. At the opening of the new house Mr. James Smith, of Pershore, preached from Psalm cxviii. 25.; Mr. Pearce, of Birmingham, from Psalm v. 7.; and in the evening, Mr. Butterworth, of Evesham, from Isaiah xiv. 32. The church continues to hold the important doctrines specified at the head of the Circular Letter belonging to the Midland Association, of which it has been a member one hundred and fifty-seven years. The present pastor is Mr. Thomas Waters, who has removed thither from Pershore.

CHURCH AT WESTMANCOATE.

ABOUT the year 1769 the late Benjamin Francis preached at Westmancoate once a month, when on his way from Tewkesbury to Pershore, &c. The house where the meeting was held, coming into the possession of a disaffected person, the congregation was obliged to quit the old place of worship the next year; but by the kind assistance of some friends, particularly of Samuel Richards, Esq. of London, and several of his relations, Mr. Haydon, after he left Tewkesbury, erected the present meeting-house, which was opened by Messrs. Francis, Ash, and Wills, June 2, 1771. Several members were dismissed from the church at Pershore in 1779, and formed a new church here, Mr. Haydon becoming their minister. October 29, 1775, Mr. W. Richards preached the first time at Westmancoate; he left the people in May, 1776. March 25, 1778, Mr. G. Cooper supplied for half a year, and left in September following.

Mr. Haydon had but an indifferent state of health for several years before his death, which took place January 19, 1782, at the age of sixty-eight years. As a proof of his regard for the interest of his Lord and Master, he left most of his property (invested in the hands of trustees) to support a preached gospel, and other benevolent designs to do good in this place and neighbourhood.

Church at Evesham.

[1409.]

The ordination of Mr. John Miller took place August 5, 1801. In 1802 the meeting-house was enlarged and a baptistry made. The charity school is continued, agreeably to the will of Mr. John Haydon, and a Sunday school has been established for many years.

CHURCH AT EVESHAM.

DR. CHARLES OWEN, in his *Character and Conduct of Ecclesiastics*, p. 155, mentions, next to William Sawtry, John Badby, of Evesham, a lay-man, who was pronounced an heretic by the bishop of Worcester, and burnt in Smithfield, for holding that bread in the holy sacrament was bread still, and not the real body of Christ, A. D. 1409. Mr. Fox, in his *Book of Martyrs*, gives a particular account of this good man; so that Evesham has been rendered conspicuous by having in it, at so early a period, a confessor and martyr for the truth.

It appears there were several Baptist churches in the counties of Warwick, Oxford, and Worcester, as early as 1640, and it is probable that some of this denomination might reside at that time in or near the borough of Evesham.

The first persons of the Baptist denomination whose names are remembered in this borough were Mrs. Mary Walker, Mrs. Rebekah Horne, and Mrs. Rawlins. The last mentioned was a member of the Baptist church at Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire; but marrying a Mr. Rawlins, she went to reside at Evesham, about 1670. She is reported to have been a very pious woman, and was an instrument of bringing several of her acquaintance to the knowledge of the truth. She usually attended public worship at Pershore, and lived to a good old age. She died about 1714, aged seventy-four.

It is presumed that Mr. John Beddome, pastor of the church at Alcester, had the greatest share in promoting the Redeemer's interest in Evesham. It is supposed the first place used by the Baptists for public worship was a barn, fitted up as early as 1704, for the purpose, standing in that part of the borough called

1742.]

Church at Evesham.

Bengworth, on the north side of the London road, where they have a burying ground, and where they afterwards erected a small meeting-house, thirty-six feet by eighteen. At that time they had preaching once a month; the attendants were chiefly members at Alcester, under the pastoral care of Mr. Beddome. In the church book of the Baptists in Alcester it is recorded that “on the 29th of June, 1712, the church agreed to break bread at Bengworth and Henley every two months, for the convenience of those members who lived in or near those places.”

About this time the Rev. Bernard Foskett was co-pastor with Mr. Beddome, which enabled Mr. B. to attend at Bengworth for the purpose above mentioned. The people were also supplied occasionally by Mr. Job Greening, pastor of the Baptist church at Stow-on-the-Wold; also by Mr. Purser, of Gnatton, near Tewkesbury, and Mr. Thomas Clarige, a preacher belonging to the Baptist church at Hooknorton.

In the year 1722, the old barn being much out of repair, the people took it down and built a new house on the same spot. It was a plain brick building, thirty-three feet by twenty-one, with benches for seats; the number of attendants from forty to fifty.

The Society at Bengworth invited Mr. Jacob Mower to come and preach to them as a more stated supply. He was a gifted member of the Baptist church at Painswick, Gloucestershire. Mr. Mower came to Bengworth in the year 1728. On April 30, 1731, the church at Alcester agreed that those of their members who resided in and about Evesham should unite with members of other churches of the same denomination residing in that neighbourhood, and form themselves into a distinct church. The people having obtained this liberty, after deliberating on the matter and being satisfied with Mr. Mower's abilities as a minister, they gave him a call to the pastoral office, with which he complied, and was ordained pastor over them May 4, 1732.

About the year 1739 Benjamin Seward, Esq. attended the ministry of Mr. Mower, and on July 9, 1742, was baptized and became a member of the church. He and his wife were both of them singular ornaments to their profession. Mr. Seward was a man of good natural abilities—he studied to do good, abounding in

Church at Evesham.

[1753.]

works of charity, and was eminent for his devotion. Some hymns composed by him are found in the Bristol Collection, having the initials B. S. He died in 1753, and on the 8th of April, the same year, Dr. John Gill preached his funeral sermon. It is published in his Collection of Sermons and Tracts, vol. i. p. 498.

The worthy widow of Mr. Seward being desirous to leave a perpetual proof of the charitable disposition of her husband, in her last will, dated June 2, 1753, settled the interest of £4,550 for charitable purposes, naming seven Baptist ministers as trustees (of whom Mr. Mower was first mentioned), providing for the perpetual renewal of trustees as often as any of them shall die.*

* MRS. SEWARD'S WILL.

The will of Mrs. Elizabeth Seward, of Bengworth, Worcestershire, widow, was executed June 2, 1753, in the presence of Isaac Woodman, W. Gibbons, and W. Gibbons, jun. and proved at Doctors' Commons February 6, 1754. She appointed the seven following Particular Baptist ministers her trustees:—Jacob More, Bengworth; Nathaniel Overbury, sen. Tetbury; John Overbury, Alcester; Philip Jones, Upton-upon-Severn; Benjamin Beddome, Bourton-on-the Water; Dr. John Gill, Horselydown, Southwark; and William Anderson, Grafton street, St. Anne's, Westminster. To them were left in trust, £2000 South Sea Stock, £2000 New South Sea Annuities, and £550 Bank of England Stock; the yearly interest, dividends, or produce, of the said £4,550 to be applied as follows, and in the following proportions:—

1. The SOUTH SEA STOCK towards the support and maintenance of the minister or teacher of the Particular Baptist congregations at the following places:—

Bengworth, Worcestershire	£ 350
Chadford Bottom, Gloucestershire	300
Henley-upon-Thames, Berkshire	300
Worcester	100
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire	100
King's Stanley, Gloucestershire	300
Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire	100
Leominster, Herefordshire	200
Sheepshead, Leicestershire	200
Coot, Oxfordshire	50

£ 2000

1760.]

Church at Eresham.

A dreadful fire broke out at Bengworth a few years afterwards, which consumed a number of houses, and the meeting-house with them. In 1760 it was rebuilt on the same foundation.

2. The NEW SOUTH SEA ANNUITIES.

Towards the maintenance of the Particular Baptist minister at Coat, Oxfordshire	£ 50
To the relief of the poor of the Particular Baptist congregation in Grafton-street, St. Anne's, Westminster, to be distributed by the minister	100
To the relief of the poor of the Particular Baptist congregation at Horselydown, to be distributed by the minister	10
Note.—In case either of the two last mentioned congregations shall not have a settled minister, the said interest is to be paid to the deacons till there shall be one.	
To the Particular Baptist minister at Bengworth, to pay for teaching poor children to read, whose parents are unable to pay for the same;—at the school at Badsey, near Evesham, six shillings a month; and at two schools at Evesham, and one at Bengworth, four shillings a month each	400
To the Particular Baptist minister at Bengworth, to pay for the support of monthly lectures in Divinity to be preached there;—viz. Eight shillings to the minister who shall preach such lecture for every such lecture; and twelve shillings for the expense of entertaining the ministers who shall attend every such lecture at such friends' houses as they shall agree to meet in	400
To the elder of Evesham during his life.—After his death, the interest or yearly produce to be paid to the ministers, pastors, or deacons, of the Particular Baptist congregations at Bourton-on-the-Water, Alcester, Leicester, and Kettering, for the relief of the poor of the said congregations	400
To William Tinkley, of Bengworth, during life	150
Mary Hughes, of Evesham, ditto	100
Eliz. Shaning, of ditto, ditto	100
Nancy, a poor woman of ditto ditto	50
Note.—After the death of these four persons, this interest to be equally divided between the trustees, in or near London, for their trouble.	
To widow Hewitt, during life.—After her death, to the minister of the Particular Baptist congregation at Beccles, Suffolk ..	100
To Mary Squires during life	50
<hr/> £ 2000	

Mr. Jacob Mower died July, 1764. During his connexion with the church twenty-four persons were added to it. In the month of November following, the majority of the church and congregation invited Mr. Lawrence Butterworth to settle with them. The meeting-house in Bengworth becoming too small for the congregation, and the greater part residing in Evesham, they judged it prudent to erect a new meeting-house in that place: this was accomplished in 1788. Since Mr. Butterworth became the pastor there have been added, by baptism (1821), one hundred and eleven members; the present number of members is fifty-one. Mr. Davis, a student from Stepney, was subsequently associated with him in the pastoral office. Mr. Butterworth died lately, at the advanced age of nearly ninety.

3. The BANK OF ENGLAND STOCK.

To Mary Squires during life	£ 50
To Eliz. Peake during life	150
Note.—After the death of Mary Squires and Eliz. Peake, for the relief of such poor dissenting ministers in the country as my trustees shall think fit.	
To Eliz. Tandey during life.—After her death to the minister of the Particular Baptist congregation at Arnsby, Leicestershire, towards his support	50
Interest to lie unreceived till one of the trustees shall die. Then the new trustee to be paid £20 for his trouble. And so to every new trustee £20. In case of refusal or death, the surviving trustees to appoint new ones by a writing signed by them. Instead of trustees residing in the country, trustees residing in the country shall be appointed; and instead of trustees residing in London or Westminster, or their suburbs or liberties, trustees residing in London or Westminster, or their suburbs or liberties, shall be appointed. All new trustees to be ministers or teachers of Particular Baptist congregations	
	300
	£ 550

William Snooke and Richard Hall, her sons-in-law, were executors and residuary legatees.

1602.]

Church at Pershore.

CHURCH AT PERSHORE.

THE meeting-house at Pershore is a good sized place, about forty-four feet by thirty-nine, with one gallery. It was altered to its present form from a malthouse, in which the congregation had met for many years. About 1721 Mr. Samuel Rickards, who was a respectable tradesman, and a member of the church at that time, was very useful in the cause of Christ. He had both ability and disposition to devote his property to promote the interest of the Redeemer. This gentleman died April, 1729. His son, of the same name, succeeded him in business, and imitated his pious example in the church: he even excelled his father in benevolent actions, and was generally reputed the most sensible man in all the neighbourhood. Mr. Samuel Rickards, jun. about the year 1742, erected a very comfortable family house, adjoining the meeting-house, for the minister, which cost him upwards of £200; and was also at the expense of pewing the meeting-house. He died August, 1752, leaving three sons, gentlemen of very large property, but not of the Baptist denomination. The above mentioned gentlemen, with their wives, were buried in the meeting house, and their names are had in remembrance as pious benefactors to this church of Christ.

In tracing the history of this church and its pastors, it is thought to be of very early date. The late Mr. Josiah Thompson, of Clapham, considered it one of the first Baptist churches, and that there were Baptists here (but whether in a church state does not appear) before the death of Queen Elizabeth, in 1602. It is highly probable that from the time of Wickliffe, and more especially from the period of the Reformation, the Baptists, in common with other puritans who were dissatisfied that the church was not cleansed from all the corruptions of popery, assembled for worship in private houses, as the severity of the times would admit. At the beginning of the seventeenth century they formed churches of the three denominations of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists.

Mr. John Ward.

[1695.

The church at Pershore originated in a few serious persons who were dissatisfied with the established ministry and ceremonies: these associated at first in a private dwelling-house, on the Lord's-day, to read the Scriptures, to pray, and converse about their souls' concerns. Their numbers increasing, they obtained a barn near the abbey, where they assembled for a considerable time. The covenant, which was subscribed by every member at the formation of this church, is preserved, but is without a date.

The first minister of this church, of whom there is any account, was Mr. John Ward. A person of this name was ejected, about 1660, from Harrington, or Harvington, between Evesham and Alcester. Mr. Ward being removed from his living in 1660, renders it probable he was one who "declared against infant baptism," such persons being particularly marked in the first act, which was passed instantly after the restoration of Charles II.

Mr. Ward lived in a small house situated between the parish churches at Pershore, which stand exactly opposite each other, and are only divided by the coach road. The little house is still standing, and it has been handed down by tradition that Mr. Ward used humorously to say, "I dwell between Bethel and Dan," alluding (as the reader will recollect) to the places where the ten tribes used to worship, and where the golden calves were placed by "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

There is no account of the time when Mr. Ward died; but it should seem he was succeeded by Mr. Timothy Thomas, who came to Pershore in 1696. At that time it was a considerable church. The association met here on September 10, 1695.

Mr. Timothy Thomas is mentioned by Crosby (vol. iv. p. 452) as one of those Baptist ministers who were noted for their piety, zeal, and usefulness, of whom he could not obtain any information.

It appears that Mr. Thomas had descended, both by his father's and mother's side, from eminent nonconformist ministers. Calamy mentions two brothers, Titus and Timothy Thomas: among the ejected ministers in Shropshire the last mentioned was his father; and Mr. John Evans, who afterwards became

1693.]

Mr. Timothy Thomas.

the worthy pastor of the Independent church at Wrexham, was his mother's father. Mr. Thomas's father died before this son was born; but his maternal grandfather, and his uncle, Mr. Titus Thomas, took great care of the youth's education, and sent him to an academy in the north of England, kept by the famous nonconformist, Mr. Frankland.

Mr. Thomas joined his grandfather's congregation at Wrexham; and notwithstanding it was a Pædobaptist church, yet he was so convinced of the duty of believer's baptism, that he was previously baptized by immersion, on a profession of his faith.

He began preaching in Wales when very young, and was extremely popular. He preached much at Rhuat, in North Wales, the seat of Thomas Edwards, Esq. of Flintshire, and at Llanfyllin, a market town in Montgomeryshire, a branch of the ancient church under Mr. Vavasor Powell.

Afterwards he settled at Pershore, in 1696, when he was about twenty years of age. Here he was very popular and useful: the meeting-house was thronged with attentive admiring hearers, who came from all the villages ten miles round to attend his ministry.

Mr. Holder, in his MSS. says of Mr. Thomas, "He was, in my esteem and opinion, the most excellent man, both in prayer and preaching the gospel, I ever heard. He had his education under Mr. Frankland, in the north of England, was a good scholar, a ready wit, and had a quick turn of thought upon any occasion. He was of a serious, savoury, humble spirit, and was a burning and shining light in Pershore for many years. His eminent experience, his christian conversation, his great diligence in his Master's service, his love to Christ and immortal souls, and his charitable moderation in things less than fundamental articles of the gospel, did endear him much to me, and made him of great use to my soul."

The Rev. Joseph Pryce, of Wrexham, Mr. Thomas's intimate friend, composed an elegy to his memory, which, though very humble as to poetic merit, breathes the spirit of ardent affection, and, doubtless, undissembled admiration of the grace of God, which had shone so conspicuously in his departed brother.

Mr. Timothy Thomas.

[1720.]

After having noticed his serving God and adhering to truth, even from his youth, and his great popularity in Wales, he says of him after his removal to Pershore—

“ O there did our dear Thomas do much good,
He fed the flock with wholesome dainty food ;
He preached in season, out of season too,
He built up saints, and sinners he did woo ;
He laboured not in vain, for God did bless
His painful ministry with great success.
He did not only take great pains at home,
Where to his ministry all sorts would come,
But also went about from place to place,
Preaching the glorious gospel of God’s grace.
He loved saints, as saints, if such they were,
For he was neither rigid nor severe ;
His people he did most entirely love,
No Macedonian call could him remove.”

This useful minister of Christ finished his work and ended his days in the prime of life, and at the meridian of his popularity and usefulness. He died January 10, 1716-17, in the fortieth year of his age, universally and justly lamented : he left a widow and eleven children. He was buried in the church-yard of Holy Cross, Pershore.

Mr. Thomas was succeeded in the pastoral office by a son of the same name and of a similar spirit. His labours and usefulness were but of short continuance, as he died June 16, 1720, aged but twenty-two years, and was buried with his father, who died about four years before.

This extraordinary young minister left behind him a solid and judicious diary, entitled “ An account of my experience, beginning to be writ about the tenth year of my age ;” and, “ This book comprehends all to the sixteenth year of my age.” About thirty years after his decease Mrs. Gillam, of Worcester, placed these papers in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Gibbons, of London, who was permitted to publish what part of them he pleased, under the express injunction of not mentioning the name of the writer. This the Doctor rigidly adhered to, and published the compilation, with a judicious preface, under the title of “ The hidden life of a Christian, exemplified in the

1726.]

Mr. Josiah Thompson.

Diary, Meditations, and Letters, of a Young Minister." The first edition was printed in 1752, and the second in 1756.

The first religious impressions of this extraordinary youth commenced when he was eight years of age ; and notwithstanding his strong and bitter complaints of barrenness and want of spirituality, it is evident his path was that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. It appears that he settled with the church at Pershore when he was about twenty years of age. From a manuscript volume of Letters, in the hand-writing of Mr. Thomas, now before the writer, it appears that he was often greatly tried and dejected in his public ministry. He had been much afflicted for a long time, and at length sunk into the arms of death, June 16, 1720, having finished his two-and-twentieth year the 24th of March preceding. The day before he died two of his particular friends (Messrs, Griffith and Francis) came to visit him. He was quite calm and composed, tuned, as far as he was able, an anthem, or part of one, and was, as his temper was naturally pleasant, innocently cheerful. At two o'clock next morning death appeared just ready to strike the long-expected blow. The struggles and agonies of nature were severe and long, notwithstanding he had been so much weakened before ; but about four o'clock, having turned his eyes to one of his friends, he whispered in a feeble interrupted voice, but distinct enough to be heard, " Peace, praise—— I have peace," and so expired the last dying pains and these triumphs of joy, mingling as it were together, the first of which are for ever over, but the joy shall never end.

Mr. Thomas was a fine poet. The hymn in Dr. Rippon's Selection, " Let others boast their ancient line," &c. is found among his manuscripts.

Mr. Josiah Thompson settled here in 1726. There were at that time but seventy members, twenty-five men and forty-five women.

Mr. Thompson was born of respectable Baptist parents, at Berwick-upon-Tweed, March 31, 1692. After being educated in the grammar school there, he was sent to the university of Edinburgh, to study with a view to the ministry. There being no Baptist church in Berwick, he was baptized at Newcastle-

Mr. Edward Cooke.

[1737.]

upon-Tyne. He was well acquainted with that excellent minister Mr. Bennett, author of the *Christian Oratory*, of whom he used to speak in the highest terms of affection and respect, not only because of the eminence of his character, but on account of having been often examined by him as to his classical attainments and his knowledge of theology. After leaving the university he resided some time with his father in Berwick, and when quite young he visited London, but on what account does not appear. In the year 1718, when but about the age of twenty, he accepted a pressing invitation from the church at Shrewsbury, and the next year was very strongly solicited to succeed Mr. Benjamin Stinton, pastor of the church in Goat Yard, Horselydown, London. The letter from the church there was signed also by many of Mr. Thompson's friends in London, though not members of the church, earnestly requesting him to attend to the invitation. Some party differences having sprung up among the people in Goat Yard, he declined coming to London. Mr. Thompson was ordained at Shrewsbury June, 1720. At Pershore he was greatly esteemed, being very popular and useful. Mr. Joshua Thomas says, that "fifty years after his removal from Pershore his memory was precious to persons residing there." In ten years fifty-two were added to the church under his ministry. The before mentioned writer quaintly observes, respecting his removal from thence in 1736, "Had he been as deaf to 'Macedonian calls' as his predecessor, Mr. Timothy Thomas, sen. was, perhaps it would have contributed more to his usefulness." On leaving Pershore he went to Bristol, where, for about ten years, he was at the Pithay, an assistant to Mr. J. Beddome. In 1746 he removed to London, and preached occasionally. He died June 24, 1780, full of peace, comfort, and joy, in his eighty-ninth year, and was buried in Bunhill fields.

Mr. Edward Cooke succeeded Mr. Thompson at Pershore: he was ordained March, 1737. He had been a member of the church in Broadmead, Bristol, and was by them, in 1735, called to the ministry, and placed under the tuition of Mr. Bernard Foskett, his name being on the list of his pupils for the ministry. On his undertaking the charge of the church at Pershore, one condition he made was, that they should receive no more

1751.]

John Ash, LL.D.

Pædobaptists into their society. It should seem that some few unbaptized persons had always been in connexion with the church until that period. Mr. Cook's ministry terminated in about eleven years. He is thus spoken of by Dr. Caleb Evans, in his funeral sermon for Dr. Ash—"for many years your worthy and affectionate pastor." Mr. Cook left one son only, who was deaf and dumb.

The church was unsettled for some considerable time after his death. In June, 1751, Mr. John (afterwards Dr.) Ash, then a student at Bristol, accepted their invitation, and was ordained to the pastoral office.

Dr. Ash was a native of Dorsetshire, and when very young was baptized and joined the church at Loughwood, near Lyme, then under the pastoral care of that singular and eminent minister, Mr. Isaac Hann, to whom he was related. By that church he was encouraged to devote himself to the ministry, and recommended to Bristol, to be under the care and tuition of Messrs. Bernard Foskett and Hugh Evans. There he continued several years, and made such proficiency in the several branches of learning to which he attended, as did great credit to himself and his worthy tutor. The church, when Dr. Ash was settled over it, amounted to only forty-eight, but so increased, through the blessing of God on his ministry, that in 1778 they amounted to seventy-nine. In the year 1779 seventeen of these were dismissed to form the church at Westmancoate. Dr. Ash died in 1779, when the church consisted of fifty-eight members; the number added during his ministry of forty-eight years was ninety.

"I had the happiness," says Mr. Joshua Thomas, "to be acquainted with Dr. Ash from the year 1755. He was remarkable for his affable temper and disposition, and was endowed with many excellent talents." Dr. Caleb Evans, of Bristol, had a very great regard for him; they had been remarkably intimate for many years. They were united in selecting the Bristol Collection of Hymns, and jointly recommended them in a preface, in 1769. Mr. Caleb (afterwards Dr.) Evans preached and published a funeral sermon for Dr. Ash, founded upon Acts xx. 37, 38, in which he says of him, "A man of a clearer head, a sounder heart, or of more amiable, steady, happy temper, the

John Ash, LL.D.

[1779.]

world hath seldom known. In his younger years he was particularly attached to the mathematics, and made a distinguishing figure in the periodical publications of that day." His learned writings in 1774 procured him the honourable diploma of Doctor of Laws. His Philological works, his elaborate Grammar, and Dictionary, are universally known and highly prized. His Sentiments upon Education have been admired for correct thought and solid judgment. Dr. Evans says of him, as a christian pastor, "Blest with a remarkable share of health and spirits, he continued, with scarcely any interruption, in the assiduous, faithful, affectionate and successful discharge of the various important duties of his station, character and office, to his dying day." He adds, "In his sentiments he was sound, rational, liberal, and strictly scriptural; and in his preaching, plain, practical, powerful, and thoroughly evangelical. His ideas of the great plan of providence and grace were uniform, grand, extensive, and truly noble; and these ideas he earnestly desired to impress upon the minds of his hearers."

Dr. Ash published also Grammatical Institutes, now called, "An easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar." This was so well received, that it passed through several editions before the author's decease. Not long before his death he published a work entitled, "The Dialogues of Eumenes." A Sermon of his before the Bristol Education Society, and a Funeral Sermon for the wife of Mr. C. Evans, in 1771, were published. Dr. Ash was frequently employed in preaching the annual sermon at the Associations: this he did in 1751, 1755, 1760, 1764, 1767, 1775, and 1778. He left a widow and six children, two sons and four daughters. One of his sons, Mr. Joseph Ash, was for many years a respectable deacon of the church at Broadmead, Bristol, and is now living in the vicinity of Horsley, Gloucestershire. Dr. Ash was buried in the meeting-house at Pershore, where a large flat stone in one of the aisles records his worth and perpetuates his memory. He lived highly esteemed, and honoured by the world, for his great abilities and learned publications.

1753.]

Church at Bradford.

YORKSHIRE.

CHURCH AT BRADFORD.

THIS church was formed in December, 1753, of about thirty members. Mr. William Crabtree, who had been lately called to the ministry by the church at Wainsgate, soon after became their pastor. They first partook of the Lord's supper December 4, 1753. Mr. Crabtree died November 18, 1811, aged eighty-four.

Before the death of this venerable and useful minister, Mr. (now Dr.) William Steadman had become pastor of the church, in 1805. He removed hither from Plymouth Dock, principally for the purpose of taking charge of the academy founded in the neighbourhood, and continues their present pastor.

The meeting-house has been enlarged at different times, till it is now sixty feet by fifty, and will seat between eight and nine hundred adults, besides three hundred Sunday school children. The whole expense of the enlargement, in 1817, amounted to £1050.

The following is a brief account of the origin of the academy mentioned above :—

Northern Baptist Education Society, formed May 24, 1804, at an Association of the Ministers and Messengers of the Baptist churches in Yorkshire and Lancashire, assembled at Hebden-bridge, near Halifax.

“ This Society originated with a few of the ministers and members of the Baptist churches in the counties of York and Lancaster. They had for a considerable time felt and lamented the want of well educated ministers of the Baptist denomination in that part of the kingdom ; and in proportion to its increase in population and general knowledge, that deficiency became more visible and affecting. Impressed with these feelings, and at the same time remarking the obvious advantages arising from seminaries established in different parts of the kingdom, amongst

various denominations of christians, they determined on an effort to establish one in their own connexion, in such a place as might appear most eligible. After repeated conversations on the subject, they determined to make their intentions publicly known. This was done at an association of ministers and churches, held at Hebden-bridge, near Halifax, May 24, 1804. At that time and place, after announcing these intentions, and after a suitable sermon had been delivered by the Rev. T. Langdon, of Leeds, a society was formed for the express purpose of establishing an academy for the education of such pious young men as might be disposed, with the approbation of their respective churches, to devote themselves to the work of the Christian ministry. The friends present entered into a liberal subscription for its support.

Since that period, an indulgent Providence has greatly favoured the undertaking, not only by opening the hearts and hands of many, to make great additions to its pecuniary resources, but also by succeeding the endeavours of the Society to obtain a suitable person to conduct the academy, as well as a fit and convenient situation for it in the neighbourhood of Bradford. After some unsuccessful applications, the Committee was directed to the Rev. William Steadman, then pastor of a Baptist church at Plymouth Dock. After spending some weeks in this county, in the summer of 1805, Mr. Steadman was prevailed upon to accept the invitation of this Society, to become the tutor of their intended academy, as well as that of the church at Bradford to become their pastor. With the consent of the church at Plymouth Dock, Mr. Steadman removed with his family to Bradford in the month of October following. Soon after his arrival, four very promising young men were placed under his care, who, from their piety, talents, and amiable dispositions, bade fair to be extensive blessings to the church of God.

The Rev. Isaac Mann, the present pastor of the church meeting in Maze Pond, London, was the first student on the funds of this Society. His colleagues were, the Rev. James Viney, of Beckington, Somerset, then supported by a benevolent individual at Bath; the Rev. Peter Mc Farlan, since deceased, and the Rev. Dugald Sinclair, the laborious and useful itinerant in the highlands of Scotland.

1826.]

Baptist Education Society.

The premises at Bradford were rented for the first eleven years, and were then purchased and enclosed, principally at the charge of Thomas Key, Esq. of Water Fulford, near York, who generously gave for this purpose upwards of fourteen hundred pounds.

The Society was favoured presently after its formation with very valuable presents of books from the Rev. John Fawcett, D. D. the Rev. John Martin, Richard Fishwick, Esq., and others; but in 1814, the Rev. John Sutcliff, A.M. of Olney, bequeathed his large and valuable library, worth upwards of five hundred pounds, wholly to this institution, which is an accession of immense importance: and in 1818 a classical tutor was appointed; Mr. Jonathan Edwards Ryland, the second son of the late Dr. Ryland, being called to that department of labour. In the year 1822, Mr. Ryland resigned his situation, and was succeeded by the Rev. Benjamin Godwin, late of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, who continues very efficiently to fill his situation.

In the summer of 1824, the dwelling-house, which was in a very dilapidated state, was taken down, and a plain, substantial stone building, sufficiently large to accommodate the president and his family, with two rooms of the dimensions of twenty-four feet by eighteen, one of which is a dining-room, and the other a repository for the library, philosophical instruments, and other furniture and apparatus belonging to the institution, was erected. To this building has since been added, three rooms of nearly an equal size, as a further addition to the lodging-rooms of the students. In 1826 the old studies were wholly taken down and rebuilt, the whole now forming a very commodious, strong and compact pile of buildings, leaving a debt upon the Society of £1100.

In this brief detail, it ought not to be forgotten, that different individuals have bequeathed legacies in money to this Society, of considerable amount. We cannot notice all so entitled to an honourable mention who thus patronized the academy; but we must not omit the name of Miss Martha Ward, who, in 1824, left the Society five hundred pounds; nor her generous relative, its late Treasurer, Samuel Broadley, Esq. who, in 1825, bequeathed to it five thousand pounds. The number of its

Churches at Leeds and Rochdale.

[1772.]

students in 1827 was twenty-three. Thus has Providence smiled upon this attempt to promote the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. The truly revered president, William Steadman, D. D. continues to occupy a station so responsible, to the greatest advantage of the church of Christ; and we trust that he, and his beloved colleague, the Rev. Benjamin Godwin, will continue so to occupy for many years to come.

Another meeting-house has been lately erected, and a new church formed, of which Mr. Godwin is the pastor.

CHURCH AT LEEDS.

THE Baptist cause here was commenced by the preaching of Mr. William Hartley, in an assembly-room. Mr. Thomas Langdon, from Bristol academy, was the first minister invited as a probationer. A Mr. Price then preached; the people divided in consequence, and those who adhered to Mr. Price built a meeting-house, which they called Ebenezer. Mr. Price preached in it till his death, after which it was sold. Mr. Langdon continued at Leeds till his death.

Mr. Acworth became his assistant, and succeeded to the pastoral office. A new and elegant meeting has been since erected.

CHURCH AT ROCHDALE.

THE church here commenced in the year 1772, chiefly by the labours of the venerable Dr. Fawcett. In October, that year, nine persons were baptized by Mr. Hirst, of Baccup, in the river, in the presence of a vast concourse of people, assisted by Messrs. Crabtree, of Bradford; Bamford, of Accrington, and Greenwood. This event caused no small stir, and a report was confidently circulated that Mr. Hirst had received half a guinea from each

1750.

Church at Farsley.

person baptized. To counteract this false imputation, a Mr. Lawrence Lord was appointed by the church at Baccup to publish a refutation, which he afterwards did, with the signatures of all the candidates, who say, "This is to certify all whom it may concern, that the said Mr. Hirst did not ask us, nor did we offer or give unto him any thing whatever for such administration. We therefore do declare that the aforesaid charge is an absolute falsehood." They soon afterwards erected a meeting-house, and in 1775 Mr. Abraham Greenwood became their pastor. He spent a few years with them, and then removed to Dudley, after that to Oakam, and then to Killinhome. Mr. Dracup succeeded him for a short time, but left them and settled at Steeplane, near Sowerby, in Yorkshire, where he died in 1795.

Mr. Thomas Littlewood, the first clerk in the counting-house of a large merchant in that town, then began preaching to the church, and was ordained April 19, 1786. He kept a large boarding school, which enabled him to exercise hospitality to a great extent. He was a useful minister till his death. He was succeeded by Mr. William Stephens, from Manchester, the present pastor.

CHURCH AT FARSLEY.

This is situated three miles from Bradford. The church was composed of persons who had for many years belonged to the church at Bradford under the care of Mr. William Crabtree. The first minister was Mr. William Roe, who had been pastor of the church at Sutton: he continued at Farsley till his death.

Mr. James Ashworth, from Gildersome, succeeded, but a division took place in the church. Mr. Ashworth and those who adhered to him removed to Haworth, two miles distant. In consequence of the ill treatment which he received from a Mr. Latham, who succeeded him at Farsley, he sank into a state of derangement and destroyed himself.

CHURCH AT HEBDEN-BRIDGE.

THE meeting-house at this place was built in 1777. It is a plain convenient building, capable of containing from five to six hundred persons. The minister for whom it was erected was the Rev. John Fawcett, D. D. who had been for several years previously settled at Wainsgate, respecting whom we proceed to give some brief account. He was born January 6, (O. S.) 1739-40, at Lidgate Green, near Bradford, in Yorkshire: he was brought up in the established church, and received his first religious impressions under the care of that extraordinary minister of Christ, the Rev. George Whitefield, who preached at Bradford in the open air (in 1755), when Mr. Fawcett was about sixteen years of age, from John iii. 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c. Describing his sensations under that memorable sermon, he said, "As long as life remains I shall remember both the text and the sermon." Mr. Fawcett united himself with the Baptist church at Bradford, in 1758, in the nineteenth year of his age.

The following transaction, recorded in his Memoirs, affords a good idea of the character of this excellent man for his serious piety soon after that period:—"March 24, 1760. *Ætatis* 20.—A COVENANT WITH GOD.—Incomprehensible Being! 'who searchest the heart, and triest the reins of the children of men:' thou knowest my sincerity,—my thoughts are all unveiled to thee: I am surrounded by thine immensity: thou art a present though invisible witness of what I am now engaged in:—I am 'taking hold of thy strength, that I may be at peace with thee.'

"I here bind myself, O Lord, to be thine, by a sacred and everlasting obligation: I devote myself to be thy servant, to perform the work which thou assignest to me; I renounce the glories and vanities of this present evil world, and choose thee as the source of my happiness, my supreme felicity, and everlasting portion. This is my deliberate, my free and sincere determination,—a determination which, by thy grace, I will never retract.

1765.]

John Fawcett, D.D.

“ Oh! thou, by whose power alone I shall be able to stand, put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee.— Let not the world with all its flatteries, nor death, nor hell with all its terrors, induce me to violate this sacred judgment. Oh! let me never live to abandon thee, nor draw the impious breath that would deny thee.

“ And now, let surrounding angels witness, ye saints witness, that I solemnly devote the powers and faculties of my soul to the service of God; and should I presumptuously employ any of the advantages thou hast given me to thy dishonour, or forsake thee, let them testify against me, and let my own words condemn me.

“ JOHN FAWCETT.

“ Thus have I subscribed myself to be the Lord’s. God is my Father and Friend. Christ is my all-sufficient Saviour; and the Spirit of God will, I trust, be my Sanctifier and my Comforter.

“ God is my all-sufficient good,
My portion and my choice;
In him my vast desires are fill’d,
And all my powers rejoice.”

Having, at the request of the church, devoted himself to the work of the ministry, in the year 1763, he, about a year afterwards, removed to Wainsgate, where a Baptist church had been formed of persons converted under the ministry of that distinguished clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth, in the year 1750. Mr. Richard Smith, the first pastor of the church, after serving it thirteen years, died August 24, 1763, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

Mr. Fawcett was ordained pastor over the church at Wainsgate, July 31, 1765. It may prove useful to those ministers who are subject to depression in preparing for the pulpit, to quote the following statement:—“ Sometimes his mind was cheered by the liberty he found in speaking, and the satisfaction his hearers expressed; at others he was full of despondency and dejection. These painful feelings so preyed upon his spirits about six months after his removal, that he had serious thoughts of wholly declining the work of the ministry. He wrote a letter to his intimate friend

John Fawcett, D.D.

[1765.]

and counsellor Mr. Hartley, of Haworth, in September, 1764, of which the following is a part :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have taken this opportunity to acquaint you with the bitter distress I at present feel. I fear I have entered upon a work to which God has not called me ; and instead of combating these fears with success, I think I grow worse. I compare myself to the parched heath in the wilderness, which knoweth not when good cometh. I am continually bowed down under a sense of my weakness and foolishness. I spend my days in pain and anguish of mind, on these accounts ; and what will be the event of these things I know not. Surely, if the Lord had called me to the work, I should be more sensible of his presence with me, and of his assistance. I make my complaint to him daily, but he seems to cover himself with a cloud, that prayer cannot pass through. I am ready to say with Job, ‘ When I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer.’ In attempting to make preparation for the pulpit, I sit for hours together, and can do little or nothing.”—

To shew the success of his labours we copy the following paragraph :—“ Though Wainsgate might be considered as the station in which the subject of these Memoirs was fixed, his ministerial labours extended to a very extensive circuit, both on the borders of Lancashire and in the opposite direction. Where he was invited to preach on the week days, numbers, who at first came merely from curiosity, were afterwards induced, from better motives, to struggle with the difficulties of the way, and repair to this hitherto solitary place, for the purpose of attending upon his ministry in a stated manner. The barren desert began to assume the appearance of a fertile region, ‘ bearing the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.’ Numbers who had never been in the habit of resorting to public worship were constrained to say, ‘ Let us go up to the house of the Lord, for he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ;’ whilst many derived advantage from his occasional labours, who from distance of situation and other causes could not regularly attend and unite with the society ;

1772.]

John Fawcett, D.D.

but used their influence and exertions in their own immediate neighbourhoods to obtain a stated ministry. Where this was the case, with the spirit of an apostle, he was ready to say, ‘Christ is preached, and herein do I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.’

“From the imperfect records which remain of this part of Mr. Fawcett’s life, it is evident that there was a considerable revival in his own congregation. The place became too small to accommodate the stated hearers, some of whom came regularly many miles every Lord’s-day. A gallery was erected, and several other improvements made in the interior of the place of worship. The prospect among the younger part of the audience was peculiarly encouraging. Many of these began to ask the ‘way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.’ Fears and painful anxiety lest he should have run without being sent, were now dispelled, by seeing these his spiritual children ‘walking in the truth,’ the greatest joy a faithful minister can have, while he looks forward to the period, when they shall prove his joy and rejoicing ‘in the day of the Lord Jesus.’”

Mr. Fawcett, in the year 1772, was invited to London to officiate for Dr. Gill, who, through age and infirmities, was incapacitated for public labours. After Dr. Gill’s decease he was invited to Carter-lane, with a view to succeed in the pastoral office. “Many things,” says his biographer, “seemed to urge an acceptance of this invitation, as he had a prospect, both with respect to temporal supplies and extended usefulness, far superior to any thing which his present situation was ever likely to afford. His income, as a minister, had never exceeded £25 per annum; and though a revival had taken place, and the congregation increased, several circumstances in the state of the church rendered his residence among them often unpleasant.

“The dwelling-house was extremely small and inconvenient, which was now particularly felt, as he had a growing family of young children, requiring more room and increasing supplies. The question of removal was seriously agitated, and so far resolved upon, with the advice of many of his friends, and the consent of some in the church, who were well aware that what they had been accustomed to raise could not afford an adequate support, that part of the furniture and books were sold, and other

John Fawcett, D.D.

[1817.]

preparations made for his departure; but his affection for his little flock, which he had so long tended ‘in the wilderness,’ would not suffer him to leave them when the trial came. Those disinterested views which first determined him to settle in this secluded spot, operated so forcibly, that he could not desert his post. Like the country clergyman,

‘He ne’er had chang’d, nor wish’d to change, his place.’

“When he found his mind to waver, he intimated to the people that £40 a year would be the extent of his wishes; but though they hesitated, and even declined entering into any engagement to raise that sum annually, his attachment to them was so deeply fixed, that he concluded, at once, to cast himself upon Providence, and live and die with them.”

The heavy affliction with which for several years he was exercised, was a great interruption to his labours, and served to draw forth the exercise of his faith in God and cheerful submission to his will. He was invited, in the year 1792, to succeed Dr. C. Evans, as president of the Bristol Education Society.

Mr. Fawcett entered heartily into the support of the Baptist Missionary Society at its first establishment. He published a pamphlet entitled, “Considerations relative to sending Missionaries to the Heathen.” He became the secretary of an Auxiliary Society, which soon after sent to Mr Fuller £200.

The closing scene of his life is thus described:—“Long as the separating stroke had been expected, it was sudden at last. The Saturday evening before his seizure he repeated from memory a considerable part of the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel, and prayed with the family, in such a manner as excited the surprise of all present. He enjoyed the company of a few friends, who came to see him on the Monday evening following; but the next day he had a succession of convulsive fits, which it was apprehended would terminate in immediate death, but they at length subsided. They, however, left him in such a state of debility, that after languishing for a few days, he expired on the 25th of July, 1817, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

“As to the state of his mind in his last illness, it was conformable to what he had experienced and evidenced through

1817.]

John Fancett, D.D.

all his former afflictions. Mercy, Divine mercy, was what he implored, with all the lowliness of a babe in Christ. He joined with the greatest fervency in the petitions offered up at his bedside; and though his mind was not in general so much elevated with holy joy as some of God's people have been, he had solid comfort, and often expressed his 'desire to depart and to be with Christ.' A short time before he expired he said, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' One of his attendants having said, 'There remaineth a rest for the people of God,' he added, 'O receive me to thy children!'

"Few individuals had lived more in the anticipation of the closing scene than himself; the general train of his views and feelings, as claiming acquaintance with a future world, and the many afflictions which he had previously endured, led him to realize this event; and though the final struggles were very great, owing to a paralysis of the heart and leading arteries, which prevented the crimson current from flowing to the extremities long before the lungs ceased to heave, he was quite collected to the last, and humbly resigned to the Divine will."

"To those of the family whom he was leaving behind, and to his friends who came to be witness to his departure, it was a most affecting season. Imagination retraced the enjoyments which his society had afforded in former years; and the continual attention which his debilitated state had long required, served to endear him still more to his immediate attendants. As long as he could speak, his expressions to them were full of kindness and tender regard, which, though intended to console, made them feel still more sensibly that they were about to sustain an irreparable loss.

"His countenance to the last was remarkably florid, without any of those wrinkles which are generally produced by disease and advancing years.

"On the day of the interment, and when the funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Steadman, an immense concourse of different denominations of christians assembled to pay their last tribute to the memory of the deceased, and the solemnity of their deportment showed how deeply their minds were affected on the occasion. The sermon has since been printed; the text, being part of the

John Fawcett. D.D.

[1817.]

dying words of Jacob to his son Joseph, ‘Behold I die, but God shall be with you,’ was selected for the solemn service by him who wished to adopt them as his farewell blessing to his family, his flock, and his friends in general.”

A small work of Mr. Fawcett’s had the distinction of being approved by his late majesty, George III. It is said, that a clergyman made a quotation from it when preaching before the king, who afterwards inquired who was the author. On being informed it was a Baptist minister, his majesty expressed his willingness to render the author some service. This was modestly refused by Mr. Fawcett, who intimated through his friend the clergyman, that the time might arrive when he should be glad to solicit and share royal favour. Soon after this a person belonging to the Baptist congregation at Liverpool was convicted of forgery and sentenced to be executed. Mr. Fawcett applied to the king for his pardon, and notwithstanding no one had then been ever pardoned for that crime, yet he obtained his request. The manner in which this event is related by his son, Mr. John Fawcett, the writer of the *Memoirs of Dr. Fawcett*, (by which it appears that other instances of the royal clemency had been exercised, his name appearing to petitions for that purpose) must be given:—“In the year 1788, the ‘*Essay on Anger*’ was published by subscription. The first idea of this work originated in a sermon delivered at one of the public meetings. The subject itself being rather uncommon, and the manner of discussing it adapted for general usefulness, he was repeatedly urged to commit his thoughts to the press, either as at first delivered, or in a more enlarged form; the latter of these appeared, on all accounts, more eligible. It is scarcely necessary to detail the contents of this work, as it has been pretty generally read and approved. It may, however, be expected that something should be said relative to a circumstance which, though very contrary to the author’s wishes, has been frequently mentioned. For the British constitution, as a fabric which had been gradually reared by the wisdom of ages, he felt and uniformly evidenced great reverence. He had a particular attachment to the august family seated on the throne, both on account of the extended privileges of a religious nature enjoyed under their

1817.]

John Fawcett, D.D.

mild administration, and the personal virtues of the reigning sovereign, who was nearly coeval with himself. As it is a principle in human nature to desire that, where sincere and grateful sentiments of respect are felt, they should be communicated to the object of them, he embraced an opportunity, offered by the kindness of a friend, to present a copy of this small work, accompanied by a humble address expressive of his sentiments, to that venerable Personage. This he afterwards learned was graciously received, and perused with approbation. He was repeatedly induced, in conjunction with others, to solicit the exercise of royal clemency in mitigating the severity of that punishment which the law denounces; and it gladdened the sympathetic feelings of his heart to know that these petitions were not unavailing; but the modesty of his character made him often regret the publicity which had been given to this subject."

His valuable commentary on the bible, in two folio volumes, was commenced when he was nearly seventy years of age, and is admirably adapted for devotional family reading. It was completed in less than four years. A volume of excellent original hymns was published in the year 1782, entitled "Hymns adapted to the circumstances of Public Worship and Private Devotion:" many of these appear in Dr. Rippon's and other Selections, and are not inferior, especially as to experimental subjects, to those of any of our sacred poets.

He received his degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1811, just as he had completed his Exposition of the Bible, from one of the American universities.

Dr. Fawcett published also—A Tribute of Respect to a Young Person; Parker's Letters to his Friends, with a Sketch of his Life and Character; Christ Precious to those that Believe; Hints on Education; Life of Oliver Heywood; Advice to Youth, or the Advantage of Early Piety; The Sick Man's Employ, or Views of Death and Eternity Realized.

Mr. Richard Smith.

[1765.]

CHURCH AT WAINSGATE.

“THE erection of a place of worship at Wainsgate may, under a divine blessing, be imputed to the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth, which is six or seven miles distant, separated from it by a wild and bleak moor. Mr. Richard Smith, who was the first pastor, in the former part of his life attended Mr. Grimshaw’s ministry, and derived great advantage from it. The particular circumstances attending his conversion cannot now be ascertained. For some time his mind was in a gloomy desponding state, and he was harassed with many disquieting fears respecting his own personal interest in God’s salvation; but he was earnest in prayer, and other means of grace, till at length it pleased God to calm his troubled breast, and to fill his heart with ‘joy and peace in believing.’

“Being possessed of strong natural parts, and diligent in his application to study, it was the general opinion of his religious friends that he was designed for public usefulness in the church of God. He was accordingly solicited, and at length prevailed upon, to give a word of exhortation. This he did at first privately, and afterwards in larger assemblies. His efforts were rendered acceptable and useful to many.

“After some time he was invited to preach in the township of Wadsworth, then a wild and inhospitable part of the country, where civilization was in a low state, and where there was little of the fear or knowledge of God. Mr. Smith preached in the houses of those who were willing to receive him. The number of hearers gradually increased; and though some ‘contradicted and blasphemed, many believed and turned to the Lord.’

“As an evidence that the power of Divine grace had reached the hearts of many individuals, and that they were attached to the ministry of Mr. Smith, they entered into voluntary subscriptions, and, without soliciting assistance from any other quarter, erected a small meeting-house, which they called Wainsgate, from the farm on which it was built, in a high situation without any considerable village near it. The proprietor of the farm,

1750.]

Mr. Richard Smith.

being a warm friend to the cause, gave the ground for the place of worship and for a burying place adjoining. A house was afterwards erected on a very small scale for the minister, whose family consisted only of himself and his wife. As those concerned in the erection were principally poor persons, every part of the work was done in the most economical manner; in one respect, so as to render the place uncomfortable, especially in the winter season. When the walls were reared and the roof about to be put on, thinking that they had not made it sufficiently high, instead of raising the wall a few courses, they lowered the inside of the building about half a yard, which caused it to be damp. The roof was supported by a stone arch, near which was the pulpit. Having no gallery at that time, the place could not accommodate more than one hundred persons.

“ Under the ministry of Mr. Smith, a christian church was gathered and constituted in the year 1750. Inconsiderable as it may appear, it was the mother-church to many others in the neighbouring towns and villages. The Almighty was pleased to honour the small society at Wainsgate, by bestowing on some of its members excellent gifts for the ministry. Two of them were particularly distinguished, who were raised up under Mr. Smith’s ministration; namely, Mr. James Hartley, and Mr. William Crabtree, of Bradford, who laboured long with great acceptance and success.

“ In the former part of Mr. Smith’s ministry, he dwelt much on doctrinal subjects; but being discouraged, under the apprehension that his labours were not useful, and that this might be owing to some defect in his mode of preaching, for some years before his death he turned his attention more particularly to the moral and religious duties incumbent on professing christians. These he enforced by the most striking arguments and incentives, drawn from the love of God, the death of Christ, the credit of the Gospel, the hope of saints as laid up in heaven, and the honour of him who called them ‘ out of darkness into marvellous light.’ In his ministry he had a manner peculiar to himself, of coming home to the conscience, and touching the springs and movements of the soul. His address was full of gravity, and his words as weighty as words could be. A stranger who occa-

Mr. Richard Smith.

[1763.]

sionally heard him, once said, ‘ This man’s words fall on us like mill-stones.’

“ In his own deportment he was eminently conscientious, avoiding conformity to the world, and bearing his testimony against the prevailing vices and irregularities of the times in which he lived. In some respects he carried his scruples respecting matters of conscience to a length which few would think it necessary to imitate.

“ It is related of him, that when he felt the risings of fretfulness and discontent, he generally visited the poorest of his neighbours, which, next to the truths of christianity, his experience taught him was the best antidote to these painful sensations.

“ His natural constitution was very infirm; and he was so broken down with disease, that when but middle aged he had the appearance of one advanced in years. His last sickness was long and tedious, and his pain for the most part very severe. But his humility and patience were remarkable, his faith steady, and consolations strong. ‘ He longed to depart and to be with Christ,’ and his desire was at length granted. His soul was dismissed from this tenement of clay, August 24, 1763, in the fifty-third year of his age, after he had been pastor of the church about thirteen years.”

The Rev. Dr. Fawcett, who succeeded him, wrote an elegy on his death, of which the following are the concluding lines:—

“ For numerous years his labours have been blest,
But now his work is done, and he’s released.
The gospel tidings he no more declares,
His voice no more makes glad his people’s ears.
Alas, for them !—how shall they now be fed ?
Who for their souls will care ? their shepherd’s dead !
Like scatter’d sheep, will they not wander now ?
Who then to them the way of truth will show ?

“ Thou, God ! from whom all gifts and graces come,
Who thus hast call’d thy servant to the tomb,
Raise up another who shall useful prove,
And rightly preach the messages of love ;
That thy poor flock may be instructed still,
And rightly guided to thy heavenly hill.”

1736.]

Churches at Hull and Haworth.

CHURCH AT HULL.

THE Rev. John Beatson settled with the Baptist church in this town in 1770. The church was founded in 1736. "His predecessors in the ministry there were Mr. Palmer, Mr. Brown, Mr. Thompson, from 1758 to 1762; Mr. Twining, from 1762 to 1765; Mr. Rutherford, from 1765 to 1769. Previous to the building of the chapel in Salthouse-lane, in the year 1757, the congregation met for public worship in a hired place, being part of an old tower.

"Mr. Beatson's nervous system was very weak. When going up to the pulpit his whole frame was often agitated so as to give the appearance of great timidity; but when he began to speak, he seldom disappointed the expectation of his hearers. He was a close thinker; his sermons were well digested; and his printed works are highly esteemed."

From the following extract of a letter, written by him in March, 1771, some idea may be gathered of the state of the church at that time:—"I am, I thank God, agreeably settled here, though we are not without our difficulties and our trials. We are in all about forty members, and I have encouraging hopes that the Lord will increase our numbers."

CHURCH AT HAWORTH.

A MOST excellent minister and pastor of this church was Mr. James Hartley. The following account is extracted from the Memoirs of Dr. Fawcett:—"This excellent man was born in the month of March, 1722: he gave early proofs of good natural abilities; but as his parents were poor, he had not many advantages of education. In the year 1744, he began to have serious impressions, and was for some time a hearer of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth: he afterwards attended the ministry of

Mr. James Hartley.

[1779.]

Mr. Smith, and became a member of the church at Wainsgate.—His gifts and graces could not long be concealed. About the year 1748, he began to exercise his ministerial talents to the satisfaction and benefit of many. He was the means of raising the church at Haworth, and was ordained over it June 12, 1752. He studied the holy Scriptures with unwearied diligence, and was admirably ‘furnished unto all good works;’ his method of discussing his subjects was clear and natural, his reasoning nervous and manly. He was an exception to the general observation that ‘a prophet has no honour in his own country.’ His congregation was not large, but very respectable. His manner of speaking in the pulpit was slow and sedate; he did not affect popularity; but those who heard him with attention were constrained to exclaim, ‘How forcible are right words!’ Like those eminent men with whom he associated, he never relinquished the people of his charge, but lived and died with them. In private life he was kind and communicative, and, from the estimation in which his judgment was held, often consulted by his friends. His neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, treated him with great affection and respect, as a fellow-labourer, and frequently made him a partaker of his liberality. On some occasions, he visited London; and the letters to him from Mr. Wallin and others, while they show the primitive simplicity and sterling piety which prevailed in those days, bear witness to the high respect entertained for him by his friends in the metropolis.

“The Rev. James Hartley had not completed his fifty-eighth year when he departed this life in 1779; but the delicacy of his constitution, being much afflicted with the asthma, had long impressed the furrows of age on his countenance. The summer before his death, he had a paralytic stroke, succeeded by all the symptoms of a consumption, which gradually brought him down to the dust of earth. The writer most distinctly recollects accompanying his parent to Mr. Hartley’s house, a short time before he died, where they also met the Rev. Mr. Crabtree. The object of their meeting was to value his books, the chief property he had in the world, that they might be sold for the benefit of his wife, so soon about to become a widow. His wish was ‘to set his house in order,’ and to make every necessary arrangement previous to his

1793.]

Mr. James¹ Hartley.

departure. He was still able to sit up, and evidenced an extraordinary degree of calmness, composure, and even cheerfulness. When Mr. Crabtree, who had engaged to preach in the evening, was about to go into the pulpit, Mr. Hartley requested that he would not pray for his recovery, as he was satisfied it was the will of God to take him hence, but rather that all needful support might be afforded in the prospect of the closing scene.

“The high esteem which Mr. Fawcett long had for the excellent man, whose end was now approaching, is evident from the preceding part of this narrative; and in this poem he exhibits his character as a christian minister in the strongest and most pathetic language, as one who well knew how to appreciate his worth. The following lines are descriptive of the closing scene :—

“But dear Euphronius felt his frame decay,
By slow degrees his vitals waste away;
His happy mind, composed to sweetest peace,
Wish’d only for the day of his release.

“Clear was his prospect of the vast reward
Of heavenly bliss, by sovereign grace prepared;
The setting sun was cloudless, bright, and clear,
Rejoicing that the happy goal was near.
Celestial comforts all his powers sustain,
Support his fainting heart, and ease his pain,
Till he resigns the sad remains of breath,
Infolded in the friendly arms of death.”

It was to this poem, entitled “The Reign of Death,” that the late Mr. Fuller refers, in a letter written to Mr. Fawcett, Feb. 4, 1793:—“I have known and loved you ever since I saw your elegy on dear Mr. Hartley. My heart, about eleven or twelve years ago, dissolved in reading over that elegy. About eighteen years ago I saw the venerable Hartley in London, among the ministers at the coffee-house. I felt a union of heart with him, though I never spoke to him, and I suppose he knew nothing of me, as I was then only about twenty-one years of age, and had preached little more than a year. At the age of seventeen I became a member of the church at Soham, in Cambridgeshire, which is my native place. At the age of twenty they called me

Mr. Isaac Slee.

[1784.]

to the ministry, and at twenty-one chose me for their pastor. My heart was much united to them, and theirs to me; yet there were some circumstances that necessitated my removal from them in 1782. This was one of the heaviest afflictions I ever experienced. It was while my mind was agitated by suspense as to my removal, that I saw your elegy on Mr. Hartley: I have not got it by me, but I never forget one line:—

‘ And in his native village lived and died.’

I wept bitterly to think I could not do so too. You will excuse me for writing thus much about myself.”

“ The Rev. Isaac Slee, who had before been a clergyman of the episcopal church at Plumpton, in the county of Cumberland, was Mr. Hartley’s immediate successor. He preached with great acceptance and success for about three years. His constitution was delicate, and being invited to officiate at the funeral of the late Rev. Mr. Smith’s widow, at Wainsgate, he caught a severe cold, through the inclemency of the weather, which terminated in a pulmonary consumption. He died January 13, 1784. At his request Mr. Crabtree preached on the occasion, from Job xix. 25; and Mr. Fawcett delivered the oration at the grave. Mr. Whitfield, of Hamsterley, published an account of his life, from which he appears to have been eminently pious and conscientious.”

A sermon of Mr. Slee’s, giving the reasons for his leaving the established church, and becoming pastor of a Baptist church, has lately been reprinted by Mr. Kinghorn, of Norwich.

A D D E N D A.

CHURCH AT PRESCOTT STREET, LONDON.

A VERY respectable minister and member of the church in Prescott-street was THOMAS LLEWELLYN, LL. D. He was a native of the Principality, and was born at a place called Penalltau-isaf, near Hengoed, in Glamorganshire; it is supposed about the year 1725. He was a member of the church at Hengoed in the time of Morgan Griffiths. He discovered a very early taste for learning, and a great thirst for knowledge. He was apprenticed to a tailor, when at a proper age, but it is not known whether he served out his time. He became serious early, and probably joined the church when he was about sixteen years of age. His remarkable seriousness, steadiness, and pious demeanour soon attracted attention, so that the church and his friends felt it to be their duty to distinguish and encourage him, with a view to ministerial usefulness. About that time there was a small seminary established at Trosnant, near Pontypool, where several young men designed for the ministry were sent to study, under a person named Matthews. Mr. Llewellyn was there in the year 1741.

After he had spent some time at Trosnant he was sent to Bristol Academy, under the care of the Rev. Bernard Foskett. He spent his time here very profitably, was a diligent student, and made considerable proficiency, so far as the course of study pursued there at that time enabled him. But aspiring after superior attainments, when he had finished his time at Bristol he came to London, and, as is supposed, through the friendship of

Thomas Llewellyn, LL.D.

[1747.]

the Rev. David Rees, of Limehouse, and Dr. Joseph Stennett, he was admitted a student in the academy then under the care of Drs. Walker, Marriott, and Jennings, where he finished his academical education, and became an admirable scholar; so that he was afterwards deemed by good judges inferior to none among the whole body of English Dissenters.

While at this academy he united himself with this church, then under the care of the Rev. Samuel Wilson, and by them he was called to the public ministry. In the minute book of the Society of London Ministers is the following entry:—"Aug. 25, 1747, Mr. Wilson reported that Mr. Llewellyn was called out to the ministry by the church under his care, and that he preached publicly last Lord's-day, and accordingly proposed him to be a member of this board, which was unanimously agreed to." He never became the pastor of any church, but officiated frequently for many years as an occasional preacher, in and about London. It is said of him, "Learned and judicious as he was, and as his discourses confessedly were, his ministerial talents were not popular; which, together with his marrying a lady of good fortune, which placed him in an independent situation, might induce him not to accept the pastoral care of a church."

It is justly said to his honour, that, "after his marriage he undertook the education of young ministers, at first at his own charge, but afterwards he was placed by the London churches at the head of a small academical institution, where he had the late Dr. Jones, of Hammersmith, and Mr. Newton, of Bristol, among the number of his pupils, who did him great credit, as they both became excellent scholars and very eminent men."

It is not known how he obtained his literary degree. In the sermon of Dr. Caleb Evans for the Rev. James Newton, A. M. alluding to his tutor, the Doctor calls him "that most complete scholar and gentleman, the late Dr. Llewellyn." Dr. Gibbons said of him to Dr. Rippon, "Dr. Llewellyn has more classical learning than any minister among the Protestant Dissenters."

He appears to have had the honour of commencing that great work which has since been carried on in North Wales. It is said, Dr. Thomas Llewellyn wrote Mr. Thomas, of Leominster, a letter, dated 30th of March, 1776, informing him that he

1750.]

Mr. William Taylor.

wished to encourage a kind of mission into North Wales, and said that he had written to Mr. Williams, of Cardigan, and some others, about it. Mr. Thomas was afterwards encouraged by him to take part in this mission. The two first persons who were baptized were inhabitants of Anglesea, in April, 1779: it was a new and "strange topic in those parts." The Baptist fund encouraged this mission to Anglesea.

Dr. Llewellyn was educated partly at the expense of the Baptist fund, which voted him £10 per year from 1742 to 1746. He left a legacy to it at his death.

Mr. WILLIAM TAYLOR, a hosier in Newgate-street, the liberal founder of the Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney, was a member and a deacon of the church in Prescott-street. This worthy christian came to London in 1750, when he was about twenty years of age. He became an attendant on the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Wilson, and was one of the last persons who were baptized by that eminent man; and once only communed at the Lord's table before Mr. Wilson's death, which happened that same year.

The circumstances which attended his conversion from a course of impiety to the service of Jesus Christ, are thus related by himself:—

"Psalm cxxvi. 3.—'The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad.'

"Isa. lxi. 10.—'He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation. He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.'

"I had, through divine goodness, religious parents, whose early endeavours to impress my mind with a sense of religion, God was so pleased to bless, that it was not altogether in vain; and though in after life I sadly strayed from the good way they set me in, yet were the impressions I received in my youth by their good instructions never wholly erased. But going into the world very young, and being fixed in a family that proved vain and wicked, it exposed me to great temptations, against which the force of education proved a considerable restraint, so that for some time I retained my integrity. I was regular, not only in my attendance on public worship, but the more private duties of a christian; as reading, meditation, and prayer, and frequently

Mr. William Taylor.

[1750.]

had joy and peace ; but alas ! it was false and delusive, being yet a stranger to the nature and necessity of regeneration, and destitute of an inward principle of holiness.

“ This was my situation till about the age of seventeen, when I remained no longer proof against the assaults of Satan, and the solicitations of sin ; and having forfeited and lost that restraining grace I before enjoyed, I found myself the subject of such corrupt inclinations as prompted me to all manner of evil. I now felt a law of sin in my members, bringing me into a willing captivity to the law of sin, drawing iniquity as it were with cords of vanity ; and going from sins of practice to those of omission, being afraid to pray to that God whom I was fully convinced I had greatly offended, and who I sometimes feared would come forth in a way of judgment and fiery indignation towards me, that had by numberless aggravated transgressions rebelled against him ; often did I confess mine iniquity, was sorry for my sin, and said, I have done wickedly, I will do so no more. Upon the feeble foundation of this sorrow and the new resolves I made for future conduct, were my expectations of pardon and happiness built : but to what purpose ? My repentances and resolutions were always like the morning cloud, and as the early dew that soon passeth away ; for as temptations afresh presented, my sensual appetite returned, and thus I remained a slave to Satan, and to my own heart's lust ; and my life for about three years was one continued scene of sin and sorrow ; sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning, till, adored be God who of his infinite mercy and free love, by an act of sovereign surprising * omnipotent grace ejected the strong man armed, he plucked me as a brand from the burning, and delivered my soul in peace ; by his good Spirit I was not only convinced of sin and deeply humbled under a sense of its evil and demerit, but made to long for free-

* “ I cannot better express the frame of my mind,” says Mr. Taylor, “ upon my sudden conversion, than in those lines of the pious Dr. Watts—

“ When God revealed his gracious name,
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great.”

1750.]

Mr. William Taylor.

dom from it, and earnestly to desire his sanctifying influences. I now saw my lost condition by nature, the insufficiency of my own righteousness, and was enabled to flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before me, even to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to his blood, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; I counted all things but loss so that I might win Christ, and be found in him, whom it pleased the Father to reveal in me with comfort, and make exceeding precious to me, yea, all my salvation and all my desire; my humble hope of peace and acceptance with God was founded alone on the merits of the Redeemer's obedience and death. By him I hope for wisdom and grace to conduct me through this world, and in him to be presented at last before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, where I shall eternally sing salvation and praise, glory and majesty, dominion and might, to the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen and Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

"Through the divine blessing on a course of industry and economy, he realized a very considerable fortune, which he employed in promoting the glory of God.

"It would be gratifying were we able to trace the workings of such a benevolent mind through the different steps of his protracted life, and under the ever-changing vexations to which, in common with all tradesmen, he must have been exposed. To observe the many distinguishing providences which indicated the special care of God, and his tender mercies towards him, would afford a remarkable exhibition of the loving-kindness of the Lord. In such a life we should not find that he employed either 'false weights or deceitful balances.' We should not discover him in 'any matter going beyond or over-reaching his brother.' Living in the fear of the Lord all the day long, we should find him constantly seeking the divine blessing upon his labours, and in all his successes returning thanks to Him who 'maketh poor and maketh rich.' Under these impressions, when communicating of his substance to the cause of Christ he would 'use hospitality without grudging,' and secretly say, 'Of thine own have I given thee.' Desirous of properly improving the talents with which his Master had intrusted him, we should find him tremblingly alive, lest, in accumulating wealth,

Mr. William Taylor.

[1811.]

he should not be innocent, or in any way fall into the snare deprecated by Agur: 'Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee, and take the name of the Lord in vain.'

"In the midst of all the temptations, however, to which he was exposed, his 'eyes looked straight forward,' and he maintained a steady and uniform character. He was enabled, through grace, to 'fight the good fight, to finish his course, and to keep the faith.' Of him it may be truly said, that 'in the evening-tide of life,' when all his reflections were alive, he enjoyed a calm serenity of mind; and 'like the sun, which looks large at his setting,' he retired gradually from human observation, and gilded the horizon with his refracted beams. It was the experience of such men that led the Psalmist to say, 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace.'"

Mr. Taylor died in a happy frame of mind, December 1, 1811, having entered the eighty-first year of his age. He was buried on Monday, December 9th, at the meeting-house in Maze Pond. Mr. Birt, of Plymouth Dock, (who was then supplying the church at Prescott-street) delivered the address at the interment. His funeral sermon was preached on Lord's-day afternoon, December the 22d, from 1 Tim. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying," &c. by Mr. (now Dr.) Newman, of Bow.

Of his christian modesty and humility, the following extract from the codicil to his will, read by Dr. Newman when he preached his funeral sermon, bears testimony:—

"'As Mr. Booth frequently mentioned in public the death of his members, if any notice is taken of mine from the pulpit, it is my express desire that nothing be said of me *by way of character*—and request a sermon may be preached from the first chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, and the fifteenth verse.'

"In this charge he appears to have imbibed the spirit of his pastor and friend, Mr. Booth, who left an injunction in his will, that nothing should be said of him in a funeral sermon, and that no more than twenty pounds should be expended in his funeral. Mr. Taylor also imitated him in another thing, viz. that he would never sit for his portrait. An excess of scrupulosity this, which we hope will not be followed by those whose conduct while living makes their portraits desirable to their

1821.]

Mr. William Taylor.

friends after their decease. Many have felt the sentiments expressed by Cowper, when looking at his mother's picture—

‘Blest be the art that can immortalize.’”

Mr. Taylor was for many years one of the treasurers of the Baptist fund. On various occasions Mr. Booth, his pastor, presented £50, from an anonymous friend, which the writer has reason to know was from the benevolence of Mr. Taylor. It was a common expression, when these sums were handed in by Mr. Booth, for the founders present to say, “We hope Mr. B.’s friend will live for ever.” By his will Mr. Taylor left several thousand pounds to this fund, “the dividends or interest arising thereon to be for ever applied to the benefit of poor, aged, or otherwise indigent ministers of the Baptist denomination, at the rate of ten pounds a year each for life.”

Mr. Taylor was the sole purchaser of the commodious premises at Stepney for the use of the Baptist Academy: for these he paid £3600. He left also “one thousand pounds to be at the disposal of the managers of the Baptist fund, for the assistance of students, and other purposes connected with the Baptist interest.”

It is worthy of notice how greatly this single church has contributed, by legacies, towards the unalienable stock of the Baptist fund. In 1777 Mrs. Hannah Beckingham left £150; in 1786 Dr. Thomas Illewellyn left £100, and in 1787 his widow also left £100. In 1800 Mr. Stephen Williams, a deacon of the church, left £2000. In 1784 Samuel Etheridge, Esq. another deacon, left £100. In 1807 Mrs. Mary Cox left £10,000, New South Sea Annuities; also £200. “It is my wish and desire,” says this noble benefactress, “that a part of the dividends arising from this said bequest should be distributed among aged Baptist ministers, men of good character and straitened circumstances, who are by age or other infirmities incapacitated from fulfilling the duties of their ministry, in sums of not less than *ten*, and not exceeding *twenty*, pounds annually, to any individual: provided such distribution in the aggregate does not exceed one hundred pounds per annum.” In 1814 it appears that, from Mr. William Taylor’s property, there was added to the fund in

Church at Liverpool.

[1738.]

different Bank stocks the large sum of £10,450. In 1821 Mrs. Rebecca Tomkins left £1000, in the five per cents.

These *bequests*, and probably some others, are in addition to many *donations* of £50 each from gentlemen belonging to the church, who thus became managers of the fund; and also of the large annual collections which have been made, at one period, during the ministry of Mr. Booth, amounting to £300; and even to the present time to a very handsome, though not so large a sum. Let it not be forgotten that to the influence of the pastors of this church, especially to that of Mr. Booth, and to one of its deacons, Joseph Gutteridge, Esq. the Baptist fund is chiefly indebted.

CHURCH AT LIVERPOOL.

THE origin of the Baptist church at this place is not known. There was a Mr. Oulton, who was its pastor for several years, who died at Rawdon, near Leeds. The congregation was small when the Rev. Samuel Medley went to them, of whom we proceed to give some account. He was born at Cheshunt, Herts, on the 23d of June, 1738, and educated by his grandfather, Mr. William Tonge, of Enfield. He was apprenticed, at fourteen years of age, to an oilman in Newgate-street, London. In 1775, in his seventeenth year, he entered as a midshipman on board the *Buckingham*, a seventy-four gun ship: he was removed, with the captain and officers, to the *Intrepid*, also a seventy-four, where he was master's mate: he was three years in the Mediterranean, and went great lengths in profaneness. "How often, looking back to this period with contrition and gratitude, has he mentioned the awful lengths he was permitted to run, and how much he was under the power and dominion of his corruptions, being at the greatest possible distance from God, and utterly averse from every serious reflection that might occasionally intrude upon his mind!

"Possessing a considerable share of classical learning, great wit, a fine constitution, and an unbounded flow of spirits, he was

1778.]

Mr. Samuel Medley.

at once the life of the giddy circle in which he daily associated, and universally prized as a companion in mirth. This lively and volatile turn of mind, he has many times said, was at this time his greatest snare, and led him into more evil than any other temptation. Thus flattered and caressed by his light and profligate companions, he gave full scope to his reigning propensities; acknowledging that he had neither the fear of God, nor man, before his eyes.

“ But, though lost to every serious impression, he was not totally without some flashes of conviction, which, in spite of all his mirth and jollity, would sometimes cast a momentary damp upon his pleasure. As an instance of this, he one day, in the height of his profaneness, casting his eyes on a favourite dog belonging to the captain, that lay by his side, suddenly wished he was that dog, that he might have no soul to be saved. The effect of his religious education would appear also in his contempt of the gross superstitions he had constant opportunities of observing, particularly in Spain: and although he pretended to no religion himself, yet so heartily did he despise the idolatrous worship of the host, and the stupid processions on these occasions, that he would put himself to any inconvenience, rather than pass by at such times; and he verily believed, had he come to the trial, he should as soon have suffered himself to have been insulted or abused, as to have bowed his knees with the deluded populace. He also held a respectful notion of the piety of his father and grandfather, never doubting but they were honest and sincere in their religious professions.” He was wounded in an action with the French, and this circumstance appears to have been the first means in the hand of the Holy Spirit of changing his will and renewing his heart. “ Mr. Medley,” says his biographer, “ was now entirely incapacitated from attending the duties of his station, and ordered to keep his bed; which to one of his active disposition proved a very severe trial. His wound, instead of healing by the means used, daily grew worse, which, together with his close confinement, tended much to lower his spirits. The surgeon at length was under the necessity of informing him, that there was every appearance of gangrene, and that he feared the only means left of saving his life was amputation,

Mr. Samuel Medley.

[1778.]

which must be finally determined by the state of the wound the next morning. This was stunning news, which at once overwhelmed his spirits; disconsolate and alone, he now began to think soberly. Revolving in his mind the education, the advice, and the example he had had; the kind admonitions of his pious father and grandfather, their counsels and prayers began to find a place in his memory. He recollected also with what importunate anxiety they had constantly inculcated upon him the duty of personal prayer, as well by example as precept.

“Considering his case as desperate, it occurred to his mind, that prayer to God must be his last resource. This reflection was somewhat encouraged by what he had often heard his parents say, respecting God’s hearing those that called on him; conceiving there was no other course left for him, all human help now failing, he resolved to betake himself to this experiment.

“At this juncture it struck him, that he had once seen a bible in his chest, by whom deposited, or when, he knew not; but he supposed it was by his father, or some of his relations.* For this long neglected book, which he, like many others, had never opened while in health and strength, he now in trouble began to find a use. Immediately calling his servant, he gave him the key of his chest, and told him to bring a bible he would find there: he opened this sacred book in the devotional Psalms, and read for a considerable time, but never could recollect which of the Psalms it was he read on this occasion.

“The great agitation of his mind preventing his rest, he spent the principal part of the night in wakeful anxiety, praying to God in his way very fervently for the restoration of his limb, and the preservation of his life; these were indeed his only objects, for at this time he had not been taught the far greater danger he was in of losing his soul.

“As the morning approached he trembled for the consequence. On the wound being opened, the surgeon, lifting up his hands and eyes, exclaimed, the change was little less than a miracle. Pleased and surprised at this unexpected event, he did not fail to set it down as an answer to his importunate, and as he thought

* This was one of the Society’s Bibles.

1772.]

Mr. Samuel Medley.

prevailing petitions; verily believing, that God had heard him on account of his prayers. At least he could not help thinking, that there was something more in what his friends had told him about religion, than he had been in the habit of conceiving. From this time he began gradually to recover, but as his health and strength returned, his serious impressions in proportion wore away." His grandfather, Mr. Tonge, was a deacon of the church in Eagle-street, under the care of Dr. Andrew Gifford, and this led to his joining that church by being baptized in December, 1760: and about six years after was called by them to the work of the ministry. Mr. Medley's first attempts at preaching were at Harlington, near Hounslow-heath, on a Lord's-day, and were, it appears, very acceptable. The next year he accepted an invitation to become pastor of the church at Watford, and was ordained there, July 13, 1768. The ministers present, and employed on the occasion, were as follow: Dr. Gifford introduced the business, asked the usual questions, and received the confession of faith. Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, offered up the ordination prayer; while himself, Dr. Gifford, Mr. James, of Hitchen, and Mr. Gwennap, of Saffron Walden, laid their hands on him. Mr. James preached to the people from Heb. xiii. 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." Mr. Messer prayed. Mr. Gwennap gave the charge, from the 2d of Tim. ii. 15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Mr. Medley concluded in prayer.

In the year 1771 he received an invitation to Liverpool, and in April, 1772, he and his family removed thither. His biographer remarks, "Here, as a minister, he enjoyed the increasing affection of a people, whose piety, unaffected love, and christian zeal, were equalled only by their mutual confidence and attachment to each other. Perhaps, in this imperfect state of things, few connexions have been formed under more auspicious circumstances, or more fully answered the warm and anxious hopes of all concerned.

Mr. Samuel Medley.

[1798.]

“ It pleased God, also, powerfully to attend the word preached by the influences of his Holy Spirit, to the revival, comfort, and encouragement of his people, and for the conversion of many others; and this success, blessed be God, was uniform to the last year of his life. Relieved from the anxious employment of instructing youth, he pursued his studies without distraction, never suffering any thing to draw him from the main business of his life, that of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was at once his occupation and delight. Having full scope for the exercise of those abilities with which God had blessed him, his popularity continually increased, not only in Liverpool and the neighbouring towns, but in London also, where prodigious numbers always attended, whenever he preached.

“ The congregation at Liverpool had increased so considerably, that in the following year, 1773, it was found necessary to enlarge the place of worship. This was accordingly done; and it was soon filled with attentive and constant hearers. From this period nothing more remarkable occurred till the year 1789, when the new meeting in Byrom-street was erected.

“ During his annual visits to London, where for a great number of years he regularly supplied the congregations of Tabernacle and Tottenham Court chapels, he had the pleasure, not only of preaching with great acceptance, but of finding these his occasional labours much owned and blessed; having reason to believe that several, more or less, were called to the knowledge of the truth under his ministry in these places every journey; as he often heard of many pleasing seals to his ministry, after his return home.

“ For some years Mr. Medley’s health was on the decline, but so gradually as not to appear particularly striking to those about him; and this was greatly owing to the variation of his spirits at different times. When considerably indisposed, he would soon forget all his complaints on conversing with a friend; and his public labours often raised him above himself, acting the part of a salutary medicine. It is well known, that under these circumstances, both himself and his hearers frequently enjoyed the best seasons.

“ About the beginning of October, 1798, he was attacked

1799.]

Mr. Samuel Medley.

with the first symptoms of the disease which terminated his mortal existence. Being engaged as usual to pay his annual visit to London, he attempted the journey, which heretofore had often proved serviceable to him in recruiting his strength and spirits. Soon after his arrival in town his indisposition increased, and the jaundice began to make its appearance, so that he was obliged for some time to give up his public labours.

“ From the first of his illness he was deeply impressed with a sense of his approaching dissolution, and, under this apprehension, took a solemn and affectionate farewell of the congregations to which he had for so many years been in the habit of preaching, bearing a faithful testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, and telling all around him that they would see his face no more. The sympathizing concern of his friends in Liverpool, during this painful absence, much affected him: he never read their letters without tears of affection, and would many times break off while perusing them to indulge his feelings.

“ The relief he obtained by the skilful medical advice he had was but of short duration; before he left town his case became alarming, and it was doubtful whether he would be able to return to Liverpool. With great fatigue, however, this was accomplished in the month of January. The sabbath day after his arrival he was so much revived as to preach twice, which proved, as might be expected, too much for his now decaying strength. From this time he was wholly unable to continue his public work, till the Easter Sunday following, when he once more attempted, for the last time, to address his beloved congregation from the pulpit. The words he chose as the subject of his discourse were the 2d verse of the 8th chapter of Deuteronomy, ‘And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.’

“ Here his public labours closed; disease and consequent weakness daily increased, till his complaints terminated in a confirmed dropsy, and all hopes of a recovery were given up. From the first of his illness he laboured under great depression of spirits, arising partly from the nature of his disorder, but more especially from the frame of his mind, which was in general low and dark, mourning much on account of the loss of sensible

Mr. Samuel Medley.

[1799.]

comforts. In this state of languor and depression he marked off the following passage out of Mr. Dorney's works, a book that had been for many years his closet companion: 'Inward peace and rejoicing have been much bruised for certain days by weakness, guilt, and distraction, that have seized my heart. There they lie like a mountain of lead; when my thoughts would turn inward, I hear nothing but outcries of guilt and accusation possessing my heart; I can find no shelter at home, I am forced abroad for lodging, company, and food. My heart is grown hard, dark, and weak; it prevails against my former sense of the Divine presence, and while it is thus filled with the clamours of death and confusion, methinks I hear the Spirit of the Bridegroom say, "Come, arise, this is not your rest—launch forth into the ocean of free grace, and let not thy expectation hanker towards thyself: though thy flesh fail, and thy heart fail, God is the strength of thy heart, and thy portion for ever."' "

"During this trial he sometimes would say, he feared he had only been instrumental in the salvation of others as a scaffold to the building, which, when completed, is taken down, as of no farther use.

"It will appear, however, from the following hymn, written while in the midst of his affliction, that, although his mind was much depressed, his hope and expectation from God were unshaken.

In my Affliction, in the year 1799.

"With sickness, pain, and languor great,
Depressing all my mortal frame,
My sorrows I to God relate,
My God, who ever is the same.

The same his everlasting love,
The same the promise of his word,
The same his cov'nant from above,
The same the mercy of the Lord.

True, I am made to feel his rod,
But 'tis the rod my Father sends;
And he, my wise and gracious God,
His glory, and my good, intends.

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Though oft my soul is sore cast down,
 And I am brought exceeding low ;
 No comfort or support I own,
 But what his promise makes me know.

Cheerful I give up all, beside
 His gracious, faithful, holy word,
 And humbly still on this confide,
 This book of life, this sure record.

Secured hereby, I'll wait and hope,
 Though mighty foes my heart assail,
 His truth shall bear my spirit up,
 His faithfulness shall never fail.

Again my soul shall be restored,
 And light, and peace, and joy return ;
 His gracious smiles he will afford,
 And I shall sing, though now I mourn.

In death my trials all shall end,
 And sin, their cause, be known no more ;
 But I eternity shall spend,
 His name and goodness to adore.

“ His heart, full of affection to his surrounding connexions, suffered many a pang at the thought of parting ; his family, the beloved congregation for whom he had so long laboured in the bonds of the gospel, and a valuable society of dear friends of whom he was now about to take a final farewell, drew floods of tears from his eyes. He would say, ‘ It is like tearing up an old tree by the roots : none knew how far they extended, or how firmly they grasped the earth, till they were likely to be torn up.’

“ This dejected frame, blessed be God, did not long continue, though the change that took place was gradual. He again began to consider God as faithful to his promise, unchangeable in his nature, and ever mindful of the word of truth, on which he had caused him to hope : and he would often say he found peculiar satisfaction in waiting for God. He was somewhat cheered by the suggestion of the following passages : ‘ Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ ‘ Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled :’ to which he added, ‘ Blessed be God, I do

Mr. Samuel Medley.

[1799.]

hunger, I do thirst after righteousness.' Again, 'Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward:' and that scripture which was first made useful to him, now afforded him no small share of consolation. Isaiah xlii. 6, 7. 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.'

"He now often looked back and spoke of his early experience, recalling with gratitude and pleasure the wonderful train of providences by which he had been led, and the more wonderful effects of divine grace on his heart, the comfort of which he was again beginning to taste. He was much revived by the company and conversation of his christian friends, in the pleasure of their society for a while forgetting all his pains.

"As his bodily infirmities increased, the gloom and darkness under which he had laboured were dispelled, and the delightful dawn of an eternal day began to break forth. Thus while disease and death were making their rapid advances, and hourly crumbling down the earthly tabernacle, the inner man was renewing, day by day. His confidence and comfort in God, as his covenant God in Christ Jesus, constantly increased; and all he said or wrote proved, that his soul was rationally and steadfastly supported, that his faith in God, founded on his eternal truth, was strong, clear, and abiding, and that his hopes were full of immortality. In his conversation and correspondence he seldom omitted to mention with peculiar sweetness the work of the Holy Spirit, and thankfully to acknowledge his agency in illuminating, quickening, and comforting his soul. Thus supported by the grace and love of his adored Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, he became more and more resigned to the sovereign will of his heavenly Father, casting himself on the Rock of ages, and patiently waiting the termination of his troubles.

"The following, copied from a letter dated July 6, 1799, will give a brief state of the general frame of his mind. After describing the afflicted state of his body, he adds, 'Yes, I trust I do find through grace, that my soul is built upon and supported by

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Mr. Samuel Medley.

the Rock of ages, even the foundation which God has laid in Zion; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, as revealed and declared in his holy, blessed, and precious word. I have not, I would not have any other foundation of comfort, in life, or in death; I daily long, and in my feeble way pray, for more and more of the power and influence of the Lord, the Spirit, to explain, apply, and seal these great and glorious things to my soul. My frames of mind often change, but still, I trust, the language of my heart is, None but Christ, none but Christ: nor have I a wish or desire above what the apostle expresses, where he says, ‘That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of God, the righteousness which is of God by faith.’ Those words of the Psalmist are often sweet and supporting to my mind, where he says, ‘I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.’”

He suffered greatly for several days, but was much supported in his affliction. The closing scene of his life is thus described:—“His children now asked him if he wanted any thing. ‘Want!’ he replied, ‘I want heaven, and eternal glory.’ On the evening of July 16 an evident change took place, and he lay for several hours in a stupor, so that it was not expected he would ever speak again. But at two o’clock on Wednesday morning, the 17th, he revived, and with a serene and smiling countenance said, ‘Look up, my soul, and rejoice, for thy redemption draweth nigh.’ He then added, ‘I am looking up to Jesus—but a point or two more,* and I shall be at my heavenly Father’s house.’ His children now asked, ‘Do you know us, dear father?’ With great earnestness he replied, ‘Know you! yes, sure I do.’ He then took a most affectionate leave of them all, and several friends, who surrounded his dying bed. Being asked, ‘What shall we say from you to the absent parts of the family,’ mentioning them all by name; ‘Say, my dear love to them; and tell them, I am going home in peace to my dear Jesus.’ He was soon after very restless, and frequently cried out, ‘Help, help me! One grain of creature-mercy, Lord!’ His friends tried to help him, and

* Alluding to the compass.

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[1799.]

said with tears, 'We cannot help you.' 'No,' said he, 'help from above.' When he saw his children weeping around him, he said, 'For shame! why will you weep? am I not in my own Almighty Father's hands, and he will take care of your poor old father.' He often lifted up his hands and said, 'My God! my portion! my portion!' then, clasping his hands together, added, 'I am looking up to Jesus.' Frequently his struggles were violent. He would then say, 'Take courage, my soul, take courage: why art thou cast down? why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.' Through the whole of his agonies, which were sometimes extreme, he was not left to murmur. Once, when violently agitated, he said, 'It is hard work; I shall die, I shall die, and go to glory.' Then, with his eyes steadfastly fixed upwards, he added, 'Are they not all ministering spirits? I am coming, I am coming.' Pushing the bedclothes with his hands, he said, 'Take it away, take all the world away, all but Christ.' His struggles were again violent, and again he cried, 'for one grain of creature-mercy, Lord! one grain!' then, lying more composed, he said, 'Well, this is a mercy;' and continued, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope!' laying a peculiar emphasis on the last sentence. About four o'clock in the morning, he turned and said, 'One more farewell, my dear children!' and affectionately embraced them all. From this time he continued quite still and composed, looking tenderly on his surrounding family and friends, and repeating many portions of Scripture, which could not be distinctly heard. 'Sweet gospel' often escaped his lips. No alteration took place further, till about half an hour before his departure, none of his family expecting to hear his voice more, when he opened his eyes, and with a smiling countenance said, 'Dying is sweet work! sweet work! my Father! my heavenly Father! I am looking up, I am looking up to my dear Jesus, my God! my portion! my all in all!' then with a dying voice he continued, 'Glory, glory! Home, home!' till his voice failed, and with a smiling countenance he yielded up his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father, without a struggle or a groan, about half an hour before seven o'clock in the evening.

1799.]

Mr. Samuel Medley.

“ Now safe arrives the heavenly mariner ;
 The battering storm, the hurricane of life,
 All dies away in one eternal calm.
 With joy divine full glowing in his breast,
 He gains, he gains the port of everlasting rest.”

FANCH.

“ He had just completed his sixty-first year ; had been in the ways of God thirty-nine years ; thirty-three years had been a minister of the gospel ; five years pastor of the church at Watford, Herts, and twenty-seven years pastor of the church at Liverpool.

“ On the following sabbath day, in the afternoon, a funeral discourse was preached by Mr. Hindle, from the 37th verse of the 37th Psalm. ‘ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace.’

“ In London every affectionate attention was shown. Two funeral sermons were preached, in the morning by the Rev. Mr. Groves, at Tottenham Court Chapel, from the 5th verse of the 130th Psalm, ‘ I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope ;’ and in the evening by Dr. Rippon, at the Tabernacle, from the 19th and part of the 20th verses of the sixth chapter of Hebrews, ‘ Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.’

“ Dr. Rippon gave on the occasion a short biographical account of the deceased, founded on the 13th verse of the first chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, ‘ But I obtained mercy.’

“ The following lines, designed for an inscription on his tomb-stone, were written by himself a short time before his death :—

S. M.

Prædicator Evangelii indignissimus,
 Olim hujus Ecclesiæ Christi Pastor,
 Naturâ, et vitâ, peccator miserrimus,
 Sed gratiâ et sanguinè Salvatoris redemptus,
 Corpus hic reponi voluit,
 Stellam illam splendidam et matutinam expectans.

Veni igitur, Domine Jesu !

Natus, &c.

Denatus, &c.

Church at Baccup.

[1772.]

“ Englished as follows :—

S. M.

An unworthy Preacher of the Gospel, formerly Pastor of this Church of Christ, by nature and practice a miserable sinner, but redeemed by grace and the blood of the Saviour, has here laid down his body, waiting for the bright and morning Star.

Come then, Lord Jesus !

Born, &c.

Died, &c.”

He published a work in 1776, entitled, *Intemperate Zeal Reproved, and Christian Baptism Defended*, in a Letter to the Rev. Richard De Courcy, Vicar of St. Alkmonds, in Shrewsbury ; A Volume, containing his Memoirs, A Sermon, entitled *The Spiritual Merchant Described*, and the Gain of true Godliness Proved, Scripture Promises of Future Blessings to God's People the Matter of their Present Faith, Wonder, and Praise,* and some other miscellaneous pieces in verse, was published by his son soon after his death.

There is a fine engraving of Mr. Medley from a painting by his son, Mr. Samuel Medley, a worthy deacon of the Baptist church at Hackney.

There have been two separations from the church in Byrom-street since the death of Mr. Medley. The church in Lyme-street is under the care of Mr. James Lister ; the other is under that of Mr. Moses Fisher : the parent church has for its pastor Mr. Samuel Saunders.

CHURCH AT BACCUP.

THIS church was formed by the ministry of Mr. David Crossby, mentioned in former parts of this history. Mr. Joseph Piccop succeeded, who proved a very worthy minister. Being unable, in the year 1772, to discharge the duties of the pastoral office, Mr.

* This sermon was translated into the Welsh language.

1753.]

Church at Arnsby.

John Hirst was called to assist him. He commenced his ministry there in that year, and continued till his death, in 1811. His life has been published by Mr. Hargreaves, now of London, which contains merely incidental history of the surrounding churches.

CHURCH AT ARNSBY.

THE Rev. Robert Hall, father to the Rev. Robert Hall, A. M. of Bristol, settled at Arnsby in June, 1753, and continued pastor of the church upwards of thirty-eight years. He was born April 26, 1728, in a village near Newcastle, in Northumberland. When very young he had strong convictions of sin, and great torment of mind from fears of eternal misery. He was about twenty-six years of age when he was led into a knowledge of the way of salvation, and rejoiced that God could be just as well as merciful in saving him from the wrath to come. He was strongly opposed to the distinguishing practice of the Baptists, and several times disputed against their principles, but being convinced, by reading Wilson's Scripture Manual, he was baptized January 5, 1752, at a place called Juniper-dye-house, near Hamsterley: he became a member of the newly-formed church at Hexham, and was called to the ministry in June, the same year.

When Mr. Hall settled at Arnsby, in 1753, the church was small and the people very poor, so that for several years they did not raise for his support £15 per annum. Mr. Hall says, "My family increased fast, having had fourteen children in all; but I found my heart so united to the people, that I never durst leave them, though I often thought I must. I trust the Lord was with us of a truth, and the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of Peter was habitually impressed on my mind. It appearing pretty clear to myself and my wife, that we were where God would have us to be; this sense of duty, and a willingness to live honestly, made us resolve in the strength of the Lord, that we would not run into debt, let us live as hardily as we might: which resolution he enabled us to keep. But many and unknown difficulties we

Mr. Robert Hall.

[1791.]

grappled with: however, I am thankful I have been enabled to continue with the people to this day, of whom I can say with truth, I love them in the Lord."

His sermon, delivered at the Association at Northampton in 1779, has been before mentioned as one of the important events in that year.*

In the year 1791 Mr. Hall had been delivering expository lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews. The last he delivered was upon Heb. vi. 12. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them," &c.

"On the Lord's-day, March 13, 1791, wherein he was taken to rest, he appeared very well in the morning, and went into the meeting at the usual time, and preached from John iv. 10, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.' It was a pleasing circumstance to some, that this subject led him to mention, what they had never been told before, the first text he preached from at Arnsby, which was in Prov. xxv. 25, 'As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.' Many thought that he spoke with uncommon vigour, beyond what they remembered for many years. He gave out at the close, 168th hymn of Rippon's Selection, 'The fountain of Christ, Lord help us to sing,' &c. He afterwards ate his dinner as usual, and then lay down for a while, and slept soundly. About five he arose, as well, or rather better than usual. About six o'clock he retired into the little parlour, and staid about half an hour; when he came out again, Mrs. Hall first perceived him to be indisposed. He asked for some camomile tea, being very sick, and complained of a violent pain in his breast, though his sickness rather abated. A friend coming in to see how he did, he seemed at first not disposed to say much, but wished him good night, when he was going away; and presently, as if he suddenly recollected himself, he called him back, and said, 'Friend Looms, fear nothing: do not be afraid of trouble, trials, nor even death: if the Lord is but with you, you will do.' This he said, in a very animated manner, and with a cheerful tone of voice, and

* See p. 41.

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then wished him good night again. To two others of his people he signified that he was not much inclined to try fresh medicines, 'But,' added he, 'I have not lived so long in the world as to be weary of it, nor am I afraid to die. I don't care whether I live or die.' About eight o'clock he wished to go into the little parlour. Mrs. Hall took the candle to go before and light him, and his friends Palmer and Vice took hold of him as he got up, to lead him along more safely; when he said, 'I shall swoon;' and sunk down to the ground, and expired without a groan or struggle.

"On the Thursday afternoon following, his remains were committed to the grave, at which an oration was made by Mr. Fuller; the funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Ryland, in the yard adjoining the meeting-house, which was too small to contain those assembled, from the text with which Mr. Hall began his ministry, 'It is finished.'" The following delineation of the character of Mr. Hall was written by his most intimate friend, the late Mr. Fuller:—

"The distinguished talents of our dear deceased friend will long live in the remembrance of all who knew him. His advantages of education were extremely small, but possessing from his infancy a contemplative cast of mind, and a habit of patient thinking, he laid in a large stock of useful knowledge. In the character of a minister of the gospel, there have been but few more generally esteemed. Attentive only to the improvement of his hearers, he forgot himself, and appeared entirely absorbed in his subject. Though he was unacquainted with the graces of oratory, and the embellishments of language, scarcely any man spoke with a more striking and visible effect. From nature he derived a large share of sensibility; and as he excelled at the same time in taking a profound and comprehensive view of a subject, the understanding and affections of his hearers were equally interested in his discourses, which generally flowed in a stream of argument and pathos. From a natural diffidence of temper, heightened by a consciousness of his want of education, he often ascended the pulpit with tremor; but as soon as this subsided, he generally led his hearers, step by step, into a large field of serious and manly thinking, kindled as he advanced, and

Mr. Robert Hall.

[1791.]

expatiated with increasing energy and conviction till the subject was exhausted. His eminent piety lent a peculiar unction to the sentiments he delivered, led him to seize the most interesting views of every subject, and turned topics, which in the hands of others would have furnished barren speculation only, into materials for devotion and prayer. He appeared to the greatest advantage upon subjects where the faculties of most men fail them, for the natural element of his mind was greatness. At times he seemed to labour with conceptions too big for his utterance, and if any obscurity ever pervaded his discourses, it must be traced to this source, the disproportion of his language to the vastness of his conceptions. He had great force without ornament, and grandeur without correctness. His ministry in the hands of God was effectual to the conversion of great numbers; and in this particular he was distinguished in a manner not very common, for the last years of his life were the most successful. But it was not only in the pulpit that he shone; in his private sphere of action as a christian, his virtues were not less distinguished than his talents as a minister. Deep devotion and unaffected humility entered far into this part of his character. Few men have passed through greater vicissitudes of life than the deceased, and perhaps in each of them no man preserved with a more inviolable consistency the character of a christian. He was very early introduced into the school of affliction, and the greater part of his subsequent life was distinguished by an uncommon succession of trials and distresses. On his first entrance on the ministry his fortitude was exercised in a scene of persecutions and reproaches, which lasted for many years; his worldly prospects at the same time were gloomy and precarious in a high degree; he had a very numerous family, and an income extremely limited. He united great susceptibility of heart with firmness of mind, and endowed with these dispositions, he met reproaches with gentleness, sustained adversity with fortitude, and pains and sorrows of various kinds with exemplary patience. In the habitual frame of his spirit he ‘walked with God.’ The consolations that supported him through life awaited him at death, for so tranquil were his last moments, so completely was he reconciled to the prospect of both worlds, that he declared a little time before he

1791.]

Mr. Robert Hall.

expired, he ‘would not give a straw to live or die.’ From his first acquaintance with religion to the close of his life, he was never known to express the least hesitation respecting his state, but enjoyed an uninterrupted assurance of a happy immortality. His conversation breathed so much of heaven, was so tinctured with the very spirit of religion, that none could enjoy it without an opportunity of being made better. It was evident to all that knew him, that his religion was not a transient impression, but a permanent principle, that it blended itself with all his feelings and his actions, and that it raised his thoughts, his views, and his passions towards heaven.

“In the first years of his ministry he encountered, as has already been remarked, much persecution and reproach; but at length his exemplary conduct dissipated these prejudices, and gained him so completely the esteem of all classes of mankind, that it may be doubted whether he had an enemy in the world, for certain he had none but those whom his piety might make such. He was distinguished as a lover of peace, and as anxious to heal breaches as he was cautious to avoid them. With some, his extreme solicitude for the propagation of evangelical sentiments might seem like bigotry; but they who knew him best were well convinced that this was no part of his character, and that he regarded sentiments in no other light, nor cherished them in any higher degree, than as he conceived them favourable to the interests of holiness and virtue.

“His brethren in the ministry will long and deeply lament him; for to them his talents and dispositions peculiarly endeared him. How many private circles hath he cheered and enlivened by his presence! In how many public solemnities hath he lifted up an ensign to the people, invited them to the standard of the cross, and warmed and exalted their affections, whilst ‘his doctrine dropped as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew.’ Great abilities are often allied to pride, but the character of the deceased was an illustrious exception to this rule. His talents and virtues were in some measure concealed from the world, and almost entirely from himself, by a veil of the most unaffected modesty. He was never so happy as when he was permitted to sit in the shade, though the high opinion entertained of his

Mr. Robert Hall.

[1791.]

abilities seldom allowed him that indulgence. It would be difficult to conceive a human mind more completely purged from the leaven of pride or of envy, than was that of our deceased friend. In this particular his magnanimity was so great, that he seemed, on all occasions, desirous of sinking the recollection of himself in the reputation and applause of his contemporaries. To cultivate the seeds of reflection and improvement in the minds of his inferiors, to behold the growing talents and virtues of his brethren, to draw merit from its obscurity and give confidence to timid worth, formed some of the highest satisfactions of his life.

“ His temper was grave and contemplative, yet few men took greater delight in christian society; and on these occasions he seldom failed to mix with serious converse a vein of pleasantry and humour in which he greatly excelled. From his integrity and knowledge it may be inferred he was eminently skilled for imparting advice, yet so carefully did he shun every inclination to dictate, that he scarcely ever gave it unsolicited. His sentiments, when required, he imparted with tenderness and freedom, but he never made advice a disguise for arrogance, or an engine of rule, nor ever presumed to think himself affronted if his counsels were not followed. In his whole deportment, prudence and humility were conspicuous; a prudence, however, that was candid, and manly, as far removed from art, as his humility was from meanness. He had failings, no doubt, (for who is free?) but they were scarcely ever suffered to influence his conduct, or to throw even a transient shade over the splendour of his character. Upon the whole, if a strong and penetrating genius, simplicity of manners, integrity of heart, fidelity in friendship, and all these virtues consecrated by a piety the most ardent and sincere on the high altar of devotion, have any claim to respect, the memory of the deceased will long be cherished with tears of admiration and regret by those who knew him.”

This most worthy minister was removed by death on March 13, 1791, in the sixty-third year of his age. Several of the Northampton Annual Association Letters were written by him. One of these was written in the year 1776, upon the Doctrine of the Trinity. A second edition was printed, to which were annexed

1759.]

Church at Northampton.

Some Thoughts on the Causes of Salvation and Damnation, in Answer to Mr. Fletcher, of Madely.

There is a fine portrait of Mr. Hall in the Baptist Register, vol. i.

CHURCH AT NORTHAMPTON.

THE Rev. John Collet Ryland settled with the Baptist church at Northampton in 1759. He was born at Stow-in-the-wold, in Gloucestershire, in 1723. In his eighteenth year he became a member of the Baptist church at Bourton-on-the-water, then under the care of Mr. Benjamin Beddome, and soon after removed to Bristol, to pursue his preparatory studies for the christian ministry, under the direction of the Rev. Bernard Foskett. In the commencement of his studies he had to sustain a severe mental conflict on the fundamental points of religious belief—the Divine existence, and the immortality of the soul. Owing probably to the impulse thus received at the outset of his theological inquiries, the evidences of religion were always a subject of unusual interest to Mr. Ryland, and called forth the utmost exercise of his abilities. When he left Bristol he settled at Warwick, as pastor of the Baptist church, in 1750. He resided in the parsonage house belonging to the great church, which he rented of the rector, who was a candid, moderate man. When some of the high church people reflected on Dr. Tate for letting the house to the Anabaptist teacher, he replied, “What would you have me do? I have brought the man as near the church as I can, but I cannot force him into it.” In the year 1759 Mr. Ryland left Warwick and went to Northampton, where he resided twenty-six years. During the whole of this time his ministry was very successful, so that the increase of the hearers required that the meeting-house should be twice enlarged. In 1781 his son, the late Dr. John Ryland, of Bristol, was united with him in the pastoral office, and in the year 1786 he resigned to him the whole care of the church, and removed to Enfield, near London, where

Church in St. Mary's, Norwich.

[1713.]

he kept a large and highly respectable classical boarding school. Here he died July 24, 1792, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

Mr. Ryland was a considerable writer. He published three octavo volumes of "Contemplations" on the most important subjects of religion; a Sermon preached at Broadmead, Bristol, August 28, 1780, before the Bristol Education Society, entitled *The Wise Student and Faithful Preacher*; an oration delivered in Bunhill-fields, at the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Gifford, entitled, *The First and Second comings of Christ contrasted*; an Edition of Dr. Cotton Mather's *Student and Preacher*; and a *Memoir of the Rev. James Hervey, of Weston-Favell*.

CHURCH IN ST. MARY'S, NORWICH.

It appears that the church in St. Mary's, now under the care of Mr. Kinghorn, existed in the close of the seventeenth century, when Mr. Edward Williams was its pastor. In 1698 there is mention made of Mr. Samuel Austin and Mr. Thomas Flatman, the latter of whom was engaged to preach every other Lord's-day, probably, as an assistant to Mr. Williams. In 1713 the church called Messrs. Samuel Austin and William Baker to the pastoral office; and it seems they had preached among the people before this, as they are called Reverend in the minutes.

Mr. David was the successor of the present worthy pastor, who has now laboured with great respectability with this church nearly forty years.

Another church was formed in St. Clement's, by the late Rev. Mark Wilks, whose *Memoirs* were published by his daughter, where his history may be read. The church is now under the care of Mr. James Puntis.

DR. JOHN WARD.

DR. JOHN WARD, a gentleman of most eminent learning, belonged to the congregation in Little Wild street. Dr. S. Stennett

1720.]

Dr. John Ward.

preached a funeral sermon, but did not publish it. He has perpetuated his name, not only by his many learned works, but by his having appropriated his property to the education of young protestant dissenting ministers at some one of the Scotch universities, commonly called Dr. Ward's foundation. Some of the most eminent of the Baptist ministers have been indebted to this bounty, and one of the Professors of the London University was educated in Scotland on this foundation.

Dr. Ward was a native of London, born in 1679. His father was a Baptist minister of the same name, born at Tysoe, in Warwickshire. His son had a great thirst for learning, and obtained the place of clerk in the Navy Office, and in his leisure hours was assisted by Dr. Ker, who took his degree at Leyden. He continued in his employment in the navy office till the summer of the year 1710, when he thought proper to resign it; and finding no other means of gratifying his zeal in the acquisition of knowledge, was induced to undertake the education of a certain number of the children of his friends, choosing rather, as he expressed himself in a letter to a friend, to converse with boys upon the subject of literature than to transact the ordinary affairs of life among men. For this purpose he opened a school in Tenter-alley, Moorfields, which he kept for many years.

He was, in 1720, elected professor of rhetoric in Gresham College, and three years after fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1752 one of its vice-presidents. He was, in 1751, created Doctor of Laws at Edinburgh, and in 1753 elected a master of the British Museum: he died at Gresham College October 17, 1758, aged eighty. He was author of *The Lives of the Gresham Professors*, 2 vols. folio; *Dissertations on Difficult Passages of Scripture*, 8vo.; besides editions of Lilly's Grammar, and of the Westminster Greek Grammar; and he assisted Horsley in his *Britannia Romana*, and Ainsworth in his Dictionary, &c.

The last work published by himself was his *Four Essays upon the English Language*, 1758. He had prepared for the press his *System of Oratory*, delivered in a course of Lectures publicly read at Gresham College, which was accordingly published in 1758, 2 vols. 8vo.

"As to his private character," says Dr. Birch, "his piety

Mr. James Dyer.

[1743.]

was sincere and unaffected, and his profession as a christian was that of a Protestant Dissenter, with a moderation and candour which recommended him to the esteem of those members of the established church who had the pleasure of his acquaintance and friendship. His modesty was equal to his learning, and his readiness to contribute to every work of literature was as distinguished as his abilities to do it, Dr. Lardner and Dr. Benson acknowledging his assistance in their theological pursuits.*

MR. JAMES DYER.

MR. JAMES DYER, father of Mr. John Dyer, Secretary to the Baptist Missionary Society, was born at Chipping Norton, in Oxfordshire, in the month of August, 1743. His father was an excise officer, resident in that town. Of the early part of his life we know but little. He kept a school for some time in the town where he was born; and, about the year 1764, entered himself into the excise. A few years after he came to reside, in that capacity, at Whitchurch, in Hampshire. Here he was led to attend upon the ministry of Mr. Cole, the pastor of the Baptist church in that town; under which it pleased God to call him by his grace, by means of a sermon from Luke xii. 32: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This was March 26, 1769. About fifteen months after he was baptized by Mr. Cole, and received into the church, adorning the profession he made with a becoming walk and conversation, and, whilst in a private capacity, proving a very useful and honourable member of that christian society. Some time after he was removed, for a short period, into the Isle of Wight; and had occasional communion with the Baptist church at Portsmouth, or, as it was then called, Portsmouth common. In the year 1770 he gave up the excise, married, and kept a shop in Whitchurch. He married the daughter of Mr. George Barton, of

* Life by Dr. Birch.

1792.]

Mr. James Dyer.

Lower Wallop, who had been previously joined to the Baptist church at Broughton, of which church her father had been long a member, and is still living. By her he had eight children, seven of whom are still living. His second daughter, Sarah, who possessed very amiable accomplishments, died, after a lingering illness, in the month of November, 1794, giving the most substantial evidence of her dying in the Lord.

After Mr. Dyer had for some time been an honourable private member of the church, it was apprehended that he had talents for public usefulness. It was not, however, without very great difficulty he was prevailed upon to engage in that work, his exercises of mind upon that occasion being peculiarly painful. At length he was called forth to preach on August the 8th, 1779, and continued to exercise his ministry at Whitchurch, and its neighbourhood, with great acceptance, till the year 1782. At that time the Baptist church at Devizes, being in a destitute state, requested him to remove thither, and labour among them, which he accordingly did. Here he continued till his death; but, owing chiefly to inward discouragements, he could not be prevailed upon to accept the call of the church, to become their pastor, till the year 1792. At that time, the church labouring under peculiar difficulties, he conceived it to be his incumbent duty to comply with their solicitations, and was accordingly ordained on the 6th day of June in the same year. This office he continued faithfully to discharge, till illness and death rendered him incapable of it. For some years after his engaging in the work of the ministry, and his removal to Devizes, he appears to have laboured under great inward depression, and to have entertained very painful apprehensions concerning his own state: this rendered him very reluctant to preach, especially in neighbouring places. But for the last four or five years of his life he seemed entirely relieved from it, and to enjoy a great degree of inward peace, and to possess a full satisfaction respecting his personal interest in the blessings of the gospel, and his call to the work of the ministry. This led him to labour with great pleasure, and made him ready to embrace every opportunity of preaching, either in his own congregation, in the neighbourhood, or among other churches he occasionally visited. In the winter

Mr. James Dyer.

[1797.]

of 1793 he fitted up a small house at Roude, a large village, two miles to the north of Devizes, which he opened on Christmas-day; where he continued to preach a weekly lecture till his last illness, and where there is reason to believe he had several seals to his ministry. In several other neighbouring places he also frequently preached. Village preaching he warmly recommended, and constantly practised.

For nearly a year before his death he appeared to his friends, especially those who lived at a distance, and saw him but seldom, to exhibit evident symptoms of decay, and to be apprehensive himself that he should not survive any long time. But on Lord's-day, February 19, 1797, he was seized with a paralytic affection, which seems to have taken him between the afternoon and evening services, and so much altered the tone of his voice, as well as affected his features, that all who heard him (for he preached in the evening notwithstanding) were alarmed. The seizure, however, was slight, and did not interrupt his ordinary course of preaching, though it left a degree of languor and debility upon him which he never recovered, and plainly indicated to himself and others that his labours were drawing to a close. He received the summons, however, as became a christian; and though afterwards he seemed to preach, and pray, and converse, as one who thought himself near an eternal world, yet that cheerfulness and joy in God, which he had discovered for some years, never suffered the least abatement. On Lord's-day evening, June 11, he was uncommonly drawn out in preaching and praying, so that he protracted the opportunity to an hour beyond its usual length. But little did his people think that this was the last time they should ever enjoy his public labours; for, if we except his giving out the hymns at a double lecture, at his meeting, the Wednesday following, this was the last public service in which he ever engaged at Devizes.

In the course of that week he went to Wimborne, in Dorsetshire, for the benefit of change of air. Here he constantly preached, either in the Baptist or Independent meeting: and for some weeks felt himself much recovered; so that his friends began to hope he would be completely restored. But, alas, their hopes were soon blasted!

1797.]

Mr. James Dyer.

On Lord's-day, July 30, he preached three times, as usual; and on Monday morning said, "he was brave, and much delighted with the prospect of returning home that week." In the evening there was to be a double lecture at Dr. Duncan's (the Independent) meeting. He began the service in prayer. Coming down the pulpit stairs, he was observed to walk feebly. He went into a pew by himself; and soon after the minister had named his text, was visited with a second seizure, which reduced him to a helpless state, and deprived him of his speech, which he never after recovered. He was however sensible, and gave evident signs that he was happy. He indeed so far recovered as to be able to return to Devizes, in a chaise, the next week; and after his return he continued to mend for several days, was able to sit up for some hours in a day, and was twice carried to meeting, but still unable to speak. Towards the latter end of August he again grew visibly worse; and on Monday evening, about nine o'clock, September 4th, gently fell asleep in Jesus, aged fifty-four years. He retained his calmness and composure to the last; and when near his death, one of his friends said to him, "Are you sensible; and are you happy? If you are, lift up your hand." He lifted it up immediately, with a pleasing smile upon his countenance.

He was interred in the Baptist burying-ground, adjoining the meeting-house, the following Lord's-day afternoon, amidst many hundreds of spectators. Mr. Holmes, pastor of a Baptist church at Wantage, Berks, preached on the occasion, from 2 Sam. iii. 38: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man this day fallen in Israel." And Mr. Sloper, the Independent minister in the town, between whom and Mr. Dyer there had subsisted a most cordial friendship, delivered the address.

Mr. Dyer possessed very strong natural parts, with an uncommon degree of manly sense; and though he had not a liberal education, he had a very considerable knowledge of human nature; acquired both by the observations he had an extensive opportunity of making on others, and an intimate acquaintance with his own heart. His affections were very warm, and his feelings very acute.

As a christian, he had a deep acquaintance with divine things,

Mr. James Dyer.

[1797.]

having felt much of the terrors of guilt, and the joys of pardon; of the depravity of his nature, and the all-sufficiency and freeness of divine grace. He kept up a constant intercourse with God, and was very conscientious in the whole of his deportment.

As a preacher, he had an uncommon fund of original thought and natural eloquence. His conception was penetrating, and his ideas sublime; his voice was very commanding, and his language, though little cultivated, peculiarly expressive and striking; whilst a masculine fervour, expressive of a full conviction of the truth and importance of what he delivered, constantly attended all he spoke. At the same time it must be acknowledged, that as he was less in the habits of previous study, and spoke more under the impulse of the moment, than some ministers, his sermons were not always equal; and as he had an uncommon share of wit and humour, which attended him to the very last, he suffered it, at times, to intrude too far into his public discourses. For this he has been sometimes blamed, nor would we attempt to justify him. But this we are free to affirm, that were all the defects and the excellencies of his sermons taken together, his equal will not soon be found; and that whoever heard him without profiting had none but himself to blame. To that system of doctrine which is called Calvinism he was zealously attached, from a firm conviction that it was the doctrine of Scripture, as well as from an experience of its salutary influence upon himself. But, whatever construction an expression incautiously dropped at any time by him might possibly admit, he was a determined enemy to antimonianism, both in principle and in practice.

As a pastor, he had more than common affection for the people of his charge; and laboured for them all with a peculiar degree of delight, both in public and private. Their temporal, and more especially their spiritual welfare, he constantly and unweariedly strove to promote. To this his preaching, his prayers, and his counsels, were eminently consecrated.

As a friend, he was firm and steady in his attachments; ever ready to afford assistance when needed, if within his power; and, there is reason to think, constantly in the habit of remembering each of his friends, in particular, at a throne of grace, both in private and in his family.

1797.]

Mr. James Dyer.

In christian society he took a peculiar delight. He was formed for social intercourse; and was the life of the circle of which he made a part. Seldom, if ever, did any one depart from it without being pleased and improved.

In meetings of ministers and churches he took great pleasure. On the double lecture, set up among several churches in Hampshire and Wiltshire, he was a constant attendant, though his attendance always cost him a long journey. Always did he speak of those meetings with a glow of pleasure and satisfaction; and the surviving members of that connexion recollect his praying and preaching, on those occasions, with a pleasure that is only equalled by the pain that they shall no longer enjoy them.

In all his religious engagements, whether at home or abroad, in the pulpit or in the private house, nothing more eminently distinguished Mr. Dyer than his gift in prayer. In this all who have had an opportunity of joining with him will allow him to be peculiar. With what holy reverence—with what humble fervour—with what a compass of thought, and with what permanency, and yet originality of expression, would he pour out his soul before God, on every occasion, and on the behalf of every one present, or of his absent friends and connexions. This, his own church, neighbouring churches, his numerous friends, and his own family, will not soon forget.

His funeral sermon was preached at Devizes by his friend Mr. (now Dr.) Steadman, from Jer. xxx. 7—9.

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ERRATA.

- Page 43, note, *for Wallington read Wellington.*
— — — *for were read where.*
— 47, note, *for Appendix read Addenda.*
— — line 11, *for Dr. read Daniel.*
— 123, line 24, *for may read might.*
— 125, line 20, *for Brain read Bain.*
— 150, line 13, *for no right read no inclination.*
— 181, line 2, *for as read Has.*
— 301, line 30, *for Spagne read Sprague.*
— 315, line 4, *for Salde read Slade.*
— 343, line 3, *for Gambingly read Gamlingay.*
— 590, line 21, *for 1775 read 1755.*



